



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Stockholm Agreement gives hope of peaceful solution in Yemen

Published 14 December 2018

During eight intensive days, the eyes of the world were trained on Rimbo, where UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths led consultations with the parties to the conflict in Yemen. The delegations from the two parties, the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah, agreed on Thursday 13 December in the ‘Stockholm Agreement’ to a ceasefire in the port city of Hodeidah. The parties have agreed to withdraw their troops from Hodeidah and for the port to be managed and monitored with UN support, which will enable the import of vital provisions to the country. The Stockholm Agreement also includes a prisoner exchange and steps towards a ceasefire in the city of Taiz.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres participated in the final stages of the negotiations and spoke about the importance of trust-building talks and the agreements reached in Sweden.

“This is just a beginning. But at least, it’s the beginning of a process in which there is a clear will to come to an end result that is peace in Yemen and the future that the Yemeni people deserve. The fact that we came to an agreement on Hodeidah – that many would consider the most difficult of the problems on the table – gives us the hope that this process will now be moving step by step,” said Mr Guterres.

“The Yemeni people now want to see results. They want stability, prosperity

and peace in their country,” said Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, and encouraged the parties to continue to engage constructively with the UN process to pave the way for stability and peace in Yemen.

“We hope that this positive spirit of Rimbo will prevail,” added Ms Wallström, who also raised the important role played by the Women’s Technical Advisory Group in the process.

Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs at end of consultations

Full text of the Stockholm Agreement

UN press release from the concluding press encounter with Secretary-General António Guterres



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# #StandUp4HumanRights in focus as the Ministry for Foreign Affairs marks the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Published 07 December 2018

On 10 December, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights celebrates its 70th anniversary. But democracy and human rights are still under threat around the world. Via the #StandUp4HumanRights communications campaign, the MFA in Stockholm, missions abroad and partners are highlighting human rights in various ways – with the aim of creating opinion and reminding decision-makers to live up to their commitments.

- Human rights, democracy and the principles of the rule of law are at the core of Sweden's foreign policy and permeate our operations in both word and deed. At a time when the rules-based multilateral international order is being challenged, it is particularly important that we dare to stand up for these principles, says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

In connection with the anniversary on 10 December, many missions abroad are holding seminars or events with the aim of supporting and increasing awareness about the principles set out in the Universal Declaration. Since the 70th anniversary coincides with Nobel Day, the MFA is also cooperating with the Nobel Foundation to highlight the fact that human rights are a precondition for research and science.







Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Handbook on Sweden's feminist foreign policy launched

Published 30 August 2018

On 23 August, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström presented a handbook on Sweden's feminist foreign policy. "In a worsening climate where human rights and women's and girls' rights are increasingly questioned and threatened, and in a world of shrinking democratic space, a feminist foreign policy is needed more than ever. I hope this handbook can be of help along the way for all of us who want to continue fighting for a gender-equal world," says Ms Wallström.

The handbook shares the lessons and examples of four years of feminist foreign policy. At the same time, it describes just a small sample of all experiences, not least because the work is constantly evolving.

Sweden is the first country in the world to pursue a feminist foreign policy. The handbook is intended to support the Swedish Foreign Service, central government administration and society in general. But the handbook is also expected to attract an international readership, since there is major international interest in the policy.

The handbook answers many of the questions about how Sweden has worked on developing and implementing the feminist foreign policy, and is structured to be relevant to anyone working multilaterally, bilaterally or on changing social norms in general.

The handbook is available from [regeringen.se](http://regeringen.se) in both Swedish and English, and in PDF and printed formats.





Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Climate change belongs on the security agenda

Published 04 July 2018

The effects of climate change threaten peace and security and must therefore be dealt with as a global security issue. This and how developments should be dealt with were the point of departure when Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström took part in the high-level event 'Climate, peace and security: the time for action' in Brussels on 22 June.

"A climate change conference will be held in Katowice in December this year, and that agenda must incorporate climate-related security risks," emphasised Ms Wallström in her concluding remarks.

In addition to ministers from countries across the globe, participants included UN environment, climate change and disaster management representatives, NATO and other organisations, European Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel Arias Cañete and the event's initiator High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini.

In her opening address, Ms Mogherini stressed the fact that for the second year in a row, climate impacts have displaced more people than war. She added that control over water is also becoming an issue of power and a source of conflict.

"The international community must become much better at understanding, highlighting and committing to tackling the security threats posed by climate change. A climate change conference will be held in Katowice in December this year, and that agenda must incorporate climate-related security risks,"

said Ms Wallström at the event, where she both took part in a panel discussion and summarised the discussions in a concluding address.

The different effects of climate change were highlighted. They included the immediate impact of extreme weather events that requires preparedness, but especially the long-term consequences, as sea levels are expected to rise, disrupting hydrological cycles and drying up lakes and other fresh water sources, leading to extensive drought events. Several participants highlighted the risk of these developments increasing competition for food and water, undermining people's ability to support themselves. This could in turn cause people to be displaced and increase tensions in nations already at risk, resulting in instability and conflict. The risk of people in vulnerable situations joining extremist groups was also highlighted.

Other issues discussed included the leadership role that large organisations such as the EU and UN must assume, and the close global cooperation needed to build capacity, increase knowledge and promote cross-sectoral efforts to tackle common challenges and threats.

"We are seeing a lot of extremism and nationalism, when what we really need is more multilateralism, not least to tackle the challenges posed by climate change. When Sweden holds the presidency of the United Nations Security Council in July, we will focus on the link between climate change and peace and security," said Ms Wallström.

"These challenges must be taken very seriously. We therefore very much welcome this initiative by Federica Mogherini. This event offers an important platform for advancing the discussion on how to address these complex issues," said Ms Wallström.



Article

# 19 updated country reports on human rights, democracy and the rule of law – some positive developments but still a long way to go

Published 28 June 2018

Today, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs publishes new, updated country reports on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, covering 19 countries in the Americas, Central Asia and Eastern Europe in which Sweden has a permanent presence. The reports are written in Swedish and can be found on the Government's website.

Our country reports are one of the many tools available to us to promote respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This work involves a large part of the Swedish Foreign Service. The reports give us knowledge and underpin our analysis.

This round of reports describes the situation as of 31 December 2017. The reports are all written using the same standardised format, and all issues are covered for all countries: an important principle to ensure uniform assessments.

All in all, we see that while progress is being made in some areas, other areas are lagging behind – not least in terms of the situation for certain groups of individuals.

Since 2000, poverty has been reduced extensively in the Americas as well as in Central Asia and Eastern Europe, which has led to a better living standard for millions of people. When people are lifted out of poverty, doors open to new opportunities.

At the same time, we see great challenges when it comes to upholding the rule of law. Corruption, nepotism and, in some areas, collusion with organised crime are widespread, despite many countries having adopted legislation to counter these developments.

The huge increase in the number of democracies in the world since the end of the Cold War has halted. In some areas, developments are even moving backwards.

Civil society space is shrinking. Many countries, not least in Eastern Europe, have instituted complicated legislation often specifically targeting human rights organisations that are critical of the ruling party. Laws on 'foreign agents' are used to silence civil society.

In the Americas, defenders of the rights of indigenous peoples, often in connection with conflicts concerning land or natural resources, are often particularly vulnerable and, in some cases, structurally discriminated against.

Human rights are violated around the world with worrying regularity, including in these regions. Freedom of expression, of the press and of information is often protected in the countries' constitutions, but purported threats against national security or from terrorism are often used to legitimise restrictions to these and other freedoms, as well as to arbitrarily detain peaceful protesters.

In all three regions, religion is often very present in society, even in countries that do not have an official state religion. Sometimes this leads to religious minorities being denied access to human rights, including through targeted violence.

The conditions in detention centres and prisons are generally very tough and torture occurs, to a greater or lesser extent, in several countries. Sexual and gender-based violence is still commonplace.

We see that people face difficulties organising themselves in independent

unions, both because of deliberate actions against them and because the permitted unions are closely linked to the ruling party.

The reports show that sexual and reproductive health and rights remain limited. While there are some positive developments, many countries in Latin America still have very restrictive legislation on abortions, leading to hundreds of thousands of illegal abortions every year. Alongside the physical and mental risks to these women, in some cases they risk facing long prison sentences for having an illegal abortion.

Almost every report describes how women and girls continue to face violence and discrimination, both in law and in practice. Domestic and intimate partner violence, particularly affecting women and children, are often seen as a private matter to be handled within the family, often leading to complete impunity for the perpetrator.

However, it is not all bad news.

In some countries, special courts have been established to investigate violence against women. In other countries, women's political participation has increased. In addition, some countries, especially in the Americas, have taken steps forward in terms of recognising that LGBTI persons should be able to enjoy the same human rights as everyone else. Finally, almost all countries in the Americas, Central Asia and Eastern Europe have abolished the death penalty, either through legislation or through a de facto moratorium.

Overall, however, the reports give us cause for concern. But our work does not end here – it will continue with determination and purpose until human rights, democracy and the rule of law are equally assured to everyone, everywhere and all the time.

I hope that our reports, and the information contained in them, will further strengthen the work that we all do. I also hope that they will be seen as a support to all the brave women and men who – sometimes at risk to their own lives – work to strengthen respect for human rights, and for democracy and the rule of law.

Finally, I hope they can convey a signal to other countries that Sweden will not remain silent when we see human rights being violated.

On 9 September this year, Sweden will hold general elections. That is a privilege. We who live in a country of free and fair elections, and with strong legal protection for human rights, have a special responsibility to pay attention to and help those whose voices may otherwise be silenced.

Let us take that responsibility seriously and stand up for all human rights, everywhere and all the time.

**Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden**





Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality - Hosts' summary and reflections

Published 20 June 2018

The Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality was held on 15–17 April 2018 and gathered more than 700 participants from over 100 countries and a multitude of sectors and functions. The discussions covered a broad range of areas and focused on concrete methods and tools to enhance gender equality and the full enjoyment of rights, representation and resources for all women and girls.

The hallmark of the Forum was co-creation. This included:

- A broad nomination process in which CSOs and other partners joined the Swedish Foreign Service, the Swedish Institute, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) in suggesting participants.
- A co-owned agenda inspired by the participants themselves and what they reported as being the greatest challenges to gender equality.
- A collaborative process in which partners, collaborators and participants developed and organised seminars together and in close dialogue with the Swedish Institute.

## Results

- A unique Forum constituting a global and vibrant manifestation and mobilisation for gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights

by all women and girls.

- A powerhouse of inspiration co-created by, and further invigorating, a multitude of gender champions from all over the world.
- A total of 29 interactive seminars and roundtable discussions that were co-organised with participants and – thus – contributed to substance, methods and partnerships.
- A platform for non-stop sharing of experiences and best practices, both within and across sectors, policy areas and regions.
- A wealth of new and further developed initiatives, commitments and partnerships focused on areas such as creating awareness, legislative change and capacity building, involving countries from all over the world.
- A number of launches of new tools, such as a 'Women, Business and the Law' report from the World Bank Group.
- A Call to Action to counter the shrinking space and to increase support for women human rights defenders, drafted and presented by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation with partners and other women's rights activists.
- A broad communicative reach. During the week of the Forum alone the hashtag #GenderEqualWorld reached almost 3 million people, trending in countries such as Australia, India, the US and the UK, and also achieving huge reach in countries such as Brazil, Canada, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, France, Iraq, Poland and Turkey.
- A wide range of articles and news broadcasts in traditional media around the globe.
- A distinct contribution and push for the efforts to implement the SDGs as well as CEDAW and other relevant conventions, resolutions and agreements.
- A starting point for discussions in new constellations, including in the form of a first cross-sectoral Feminist Think Space held back-to-back with the Forum and co-hosted by UN Women and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and cofacilitated by UN Women and Sida.

## Next steps

- Building on the momentum and capitalising on the results of the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality, Tunisia will host the conference Tunis Forum on Gender Equality in 2019.
- Participants are pursuing a number of other initiatives linked to and/or inspired by the Forum.
- Participants can continue to register initiatives, commitments and partnerships resulting from or connected to the Forum on the Forum

website: <http://genderequalworld.com/initiatives/>.

- The Swedish Institute will post documentation from all the seminars and roundtables on the website. Together with other outcomes of the Forum, the documentation will serve as a library of best practices and a platform for continued networking.
- The Swedish Institute will develop a tool kit so that Swedish embassies and other stakeholders can take the Forum and its outcomes further in their respective context.
- Sweden commits to implementing the 2018 action plan for feminist foreign policy and launching a handbook on how to conduct a feminist foreign policy. Sida will operationalise the new global development cooperation strategy for gender equality.
- Sweden will present the documentation and results of the Forum to UN Women, as well as cooperate with UN Women and other partners on following up the Forum, including by disseminating and drawing on the best practices and experiences shared.
- Sweden will continue the dialogue with partners interested in arranging events inspired by and following up the Forum.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Joining forces to strengthen global gender equality efforts

Published 23 April 2018

More than 700 gender equality advocates from more than 100 countries gathered at the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality to exchange experiences and mobilise efforts for global gender equality. The participants included key figures from civil society organisations, business, academia and politics. They all have the same goal: a gender-equal world.

The Forum took place at a decisive point in time. While gender equality is progressing in many places, many of the participants highlighted the fact that gender inequality and discrimination of women and girls are among the greatest human rights challenges of our time. Efforts to promote women's and girls' rights, representation and access to resources therefore require concerted action. It requires cooperation between gender equality advocates and decision-makers, and between men and women.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström began her speech with a special welcome to the men, stressing that gender equality is not a women's issue – it concerns peace, security, development and democracy. To illustrate the path to gender equality, she quoted Mahatma Gandhi:

"First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win. I sense that we are winning," she said.

## **More statistics needed**

To tackle the issue of gender equality, the right conditions are required. Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and

Climate and Deputy Prime Minister, highlighted identifying gender inequality as an area requiring considerable improvement.

"What you don't know about, you don't care about. We need more statistics on gender equality in the world to move forward. That will give even better opportunities to work for increased gender equality," she said.

### **"Gender equality is smart economics"**

Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde made the point that gender equality is not only wise and right, it is also smart economics.

"Women who participate in the labour market have more power over their own lives. This strengthens the whole of society. Shutting women out of economic activity is probably the world's greatest waste of opportunity and talent," said Ms Linde.

The Forum delegates are now urged to submit concrete examples of commitments, initiatives and cooperation to continue supporting and inspiring each other in their efforts to increase gender equality.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Note to members of the media: Programme for UN Secretary- General and Security Council working meeting and visit in Sweden 20–23 April 2018

Published 20 April 2018

The annual informal working meeting with the UN Secretary-General and the Security Council will be held at Dag Hammarskjöld's farm Backåkra in Skåne on 21–23 April 2018. Afterwards, UN Secretary-General António Guterres will continue to Uppsala and Stockholm.

## Media programme

Friday 20 April

### **Visit to the European Spallation Source (ESS), Lund**

Members of the Security Council visit the European Spallation Source (ESS) in Lund. This is a unique material research facility based on the world's most powerful neutron source. Sweden and Denmark are the host countries of the ESS, which is one of Europe's largest infrastructure projects for research. The visit provides an opportunity to examine the interplay between technological development and global challenges, and how research and development can be used to meet current problems and crises.

The media will have the opportunity to cover the beginning of the visit.

## Saturday 21 April

### **Secretary-General and Security Council informal working meeting at Backåkra**

Besides the Secretary-General and members of the Security Council, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will be on hand in connection with the informal working meeting.

Photo opportunity on arrival.

Press briefing/doorstep with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and President of the UN Security Council, Peru's UN Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra.

## Sunday 22 April

### **Secretary-General visits Uppsala**

Secretary-General António Guterres delivers the Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture at Uppsala Castle. Since 1998, the Lecture has been an annual event held in memory of Dag Hammarskjöld and the values he stood for in his deeds and actions. Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin will attend on behalf of the Government. In addition to the Lecture, the Secretary-General will take part in a wreath-laying ceremony at Dag Hammarskjöld's grave and have a meeting with Crown Princess Victoria.

A separate press invitation will be sent by the co-organisers, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and Uppsala University.

## Monday 23 April

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven receives Secretary-General António Guterres in Stockholm

Press invitation



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# The UN Secretary-General will be holding an informal working meeting with the Security Council in Sweden

Published 22 March 2018

In April, UN Secretary-General António Guterres will hold his annual informal working meeting with the UN Security Council in Sweden. The meeting will take place in April at Dag Hammarskjöld's farm Backåkra in Skåne. During his visit to Sweden, the Secretary-General will also have talks with the Prime Minister, as well as giving the annual Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture, which is arranged by Uppsala University and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation.

## What will the meeting with the Security Council be about?

The theme of this year's meeting is how UN peace-keeping missions can be strengthened and made more effective, and how cooperation can increase between regional organisations. The meeting is an opportunity for the Secretary-General and the Security Council to discuss current issues in a confidential and informal setting.

## Who will be taking part?

The informal working meeting will be attended by the Secretary-General and



the members of the Security Council, represented by their UN ambassadors. The Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs will also attend parts of the meeting. The Secretary-General will pay a longer visit to Sweden and will also have talks with the Prime Minister, as well as giving the Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture, which is arranged by Uppsala University and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation. Representatives of the Riksdag parties will be invited to take part in parts of the programme.

## What is Sweden's role?

The Secretary-General holds an informal working meeting every year, as will be the case this year too. With the meeting being held in Backåkra, Sweden will host the visit of the Security Council and the Secretary-General. The Prime Minister will host a working lunch and the Minister for Foreign Affairs will host a dinner for the Security Council.

During its time on the Security Council, Sweden has taken an active role and achieved concrete results. Sweden has a long tradition of working for conflict prevention, as well as for peaceful solutions to conflicts. Moreover, it was Dag Hammarskjöld, a Swede, who took the initiative to create the UN's first peace-keeping mission with armed troops.

## Why Sweden and Backåkra?

This is a unique opportunity for Sweden to provide a meeting place for the entire UN Security Council. Backåkra has been renovated so as to function as a meeting place on topics that were close to Dag Hammarskjöld's heart, such as international cooperation, peace research, the environment and human rights.

## Why is this important?

The informal dialogue at the working meeting will give the Secretary-General an opportunity to gain support among the Security Council members for his ideas for reform of UN peacekeeping. For Sweden this is an opportunity for exchange with the highest leadership of the UN, as well as with its bodies for peace and security. It is also an opportunity to further strengthen Sweden's impact during our time on the Security Council.

## Who is paying?

Sweden and the UN will share the costs. The UN will cover the costs of the Secretary-General's travel to and from Sweden. The UN will also pay for most of the costs of his delegation's travel and some of the delegation's hotel costs in Stockholm. Sweden will cover the rest of the costs, including the Council members' travel to and from Sweden, some of the costs of their and the Secretary-General's accommodation in Sweden, and the meeting venue. The costs are expected to amount to SEK 2 million, which will be charged to the Government's budget, expenditure area 5 International cooperation, appropriation 1:2 Peace and security-building activities, appropriation item 4:1 Ministry for Foreign Affairs – special initiatives. The financing, budget and costs will be



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Talks between Swedish and North Korean foreign ministers concluded

Published 17 March 2018

On 15–17 March, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and North Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs Ri Yong-ho met in Stockholm for talks. The North Korean delegation also paid a courtesy call on Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. The talks focused primarily on the security situation on the Korean peninsula, which is high on the UN Security Council agenda. Sweden is a member of the Security Council for the 2017–2018 term.

The foreign ministers discussed opportunities and challenges associated with continued diplomatic efforts to reach a peaceful solution to the conflict. They also discussed bilateral relations.

Talks concerned Sweden's consular responsibilities as a protecting power for the United States, Canada and Australia. Sweden underlined the need for North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons and missile programmes in accordance with Security Council resolutions. Other discussions centred on the humanitarian situation in North Korea, sanctions, and regional cooperation and security issues for countries including South Korea, Japan, Russia, China and the United States.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# World's first public digital meeting of foreign ministers held today

Published 08 March 2017

Today, March 8, on International Women's Day, the first public digital meeting of foreign ministers was held. Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström gathered her network of women foreign ministers to discuss feminist foreign policy. During the meeting the participants shared experiences and good examples, and gave their views on gender equality in a foreign policy context.

Foreign ministers from four countries participated in the meeting on the theme of 'women, peace and security'. In addition to Sweden, the participating countries were: Panama, Kenya and Liechtenstein. During the meeting, each country presented their priorities in the area.

"Issues surrounding women, peace and security not only concern women's rights, they also concern creating peace and stability in the world. Studies show that women's involvement increases the chances of securing peace agreements, and ensuring that they are sustainable in the long-term. In a world affected by more conflicts than in several decades, it is therefore a very important theme to both highlight and implement measures on," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

Sweden has made this theme a high priority issue during its two-year non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

"Peace and security are created together. They require dialogue and cooperation. The digital meeting was therefore an opportunity to discuss

common challenges and share experiences. The discussions were very rewarding and constructive," concludes Ms Wallström.

The meeting could be watched online by the general public. Anyone could follow the discussions in real-time on the Ministry for Foreign Affairs Facebook page, Twitter feed and YouTube page. A recorded video of the meeting can also be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=117nZnUWgrQ>

[facebook.com/SweMFA/posts/618902731636212?  
business\\_id=247984128886880](https://facebook.com/SweMFA/posts/618902731636212?business_id=247984128886880)



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden chair of expert group on women, peace and security

Published 21 December 2016 Updated 21 December 2016

As of 1 January 2017, Sweden will co-chair the UN Security Council's Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security together with Uruguay and the United Kingdom.

The purpose of the expert group is to improve the flow of knowledge and information to the Security Council, to influence country-specific situations and to facilitate better oversight, coordination and implementation of the agenda for women, peace and security. This co-chairmanship will be a unique opportunity for Sweden to influence the work of the Security Council in this area. The informal expert group has been active for a year, with the United Kingdom and Spain as co-chairs in 2016. The focus during the first year was the situation in Mali, the Central African Republic, Iraq and Afghanistan.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Baltic foreign ministers welcomed to Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Published 30 August 2016 Updated 30 August 2016

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström today received the foreign ministers of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania for talks in connection with the 25th anniversary of the Baltic countries regaining their independence and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations.

At the meeting, held at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Stockholm, the ministers discussed the security policy situation in the neighbourhood, current EU issues (including the consequences of Brexit), migration and Turkey.

Also on the agenda was Sweden's membership of the United Nations Security Council in 2017–2018



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Tuesday's the day the UN General Assembly elects new Security Council non-permanent members

Published 23 June 2016 Updated 23 June 2016

## The finish line for Sweden's candidacy to the United Nations Security Council for 2017–2018 is in sight.

"Our candidacy to the Security Council is about Sweden's ability to influence the troubled world we live in. A seat on the Security Council would mean an additional platform for us to pursue our policies. Sweden can take a seat at the table and put forward opinions and values that influence the world in a positive direction," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

The election takes place on Tuesday 28 June in the General Assembly at UN Headquarters in New York.

It is expected to begin in the late morning, local (New York) time, which means around 17.00 Swedish time. It will be broadcast on UN Web TV. Follow the election here: <http://webtv.un.org/>

Sweden, the Netherlands and Italy are competing for two seats for the Western European and Others Group (WEOG).

If Sweden is elected, it will once again be a member of the Security Council after a twenty-year absence. Sweden was the first to formally announce its candidacy in 2005, and was followed by the Netherlands the same year and Italy in 2009.

For Sweden to be elected to the Council, two thirds of the Member States of the UN General Assembly must vote for Sweden. Every Member State has two votes. If all the 193 countries are present at the election, 129 votes are



required (two-thirds majority). In theory, only one round of voting is required, but the voting will continue until two countries have secured the two-thirds majority required for a seat.

There is no limit to the number of voting rounds that may take place. The record number was set in 1979. After 154 rounds could not produce a winner between Colombia and Cuba, Mexico was endorsed as the compromise candidate in round 155.

The election is usually decided by between one and four rounds of voting.

This year, Sweden is also celebrating its 70th anniversary as a member of the United Nations. If you would like a three-minute summary of these 70 years, be sure to watch the UN film by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs met American Jewish Committee

Published 08 June 2016 Updated 09 June 2016

Today, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström met representatives of the American Jewish Committee (AJC).

The AJC is one of the oldest Jewish organisations in the United States. Aron Verständig, chairman of the Jewish Community in Stockholm, also took part in the meeting. The meeting was an opportunity to discuss antisemitism in Sweden and globally, as well as the Government's work to combat antisemitism and other types of racism, intolerance and discrimination. The Government is currently preparing an action plan to combat racism and hate crime.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Public lecture with Margot Wallstrom on the Feminist Foreign Policy

Published 16 March 2016 Updated 16 March 2016

In 2014, as newly-appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallström launched Sweden's feminist foreign policy. At a public lecture in Brussels on 14 March, she spoke about the content and implementation of this policy. Ms Wallström stressed the reasons why women need to be at the negotiating table in peace talks, and the responsibility the European Union has to make a difference, in particular with regard to external relations.

"What is important is that the realisation is growing that gender equality is not a women's issue but rather a make-or-break issue. It is a make-or-break issue in itself – and for peace, security and sustainable development as a whole."

With these words, Ms Wallström began her lecture, addressing a crowded hall and an audience watching the livestream.

Despite the fact that peace processes involving both women and men result in more sustainable agreements, only four per cent of signatories of peace agreements between 1992 and 2011 were women.

"A feminist foreign policy therefore defines gender equality as a peace and security issue as well," Ms Wallström explained.

This is also why the Swedish Government supports women in mediator networks, for example in the ongoing conflict in Syria.

Ms Wallström reminded the audience of the success of the Millennium Development Goals in making it possible for more girls to attend school, but that much remains to be done, as she showed through a number of concrete examples.

"It is clear that we have to start with the facts if we want to make a difference for the 'three Rs'," Margot Wallström said, referring to women's representation, rights and resources.

Ms Wallström's message to the EU was clear: the EU has an important role in showing that there is a link between internal and external policy. The EU must deliver for women and girls, lead by example and ensure that gender equality permeates all external action.

"A gender perspective should also be part of the EU political dialogue with third countries, our neighbourhood policy, the Eastern Partnership, and our enlargement and trade policy," Ms Wallström emphasised.

Ms Wallström recounted that in the EU Foreign Affairs Council she asks whether women are part of the processes, but that sometimes she waits to see whether anyone else will raise the issue.

"Why does it always have to be me?" she asked rhetorically.

The lecture was arranged jointly by the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the European Union.

Event page at the German Marshall Fund of the United States



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# A Feminist Foreign Policy - a public lecture with Margot Wallström

Published 11 March 2016 Updated 11 March 2016

”We can firmly state that the promotion of gender equality is not only a matter of women’s rights, but also, more importantly, a matter of ensuring peace and security for all.” These are the words of a Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström in an article on the Syrian peace talks published in the Guardian on March 8 - the International Women’s Day. On March 14 Margot Wallström elaborates on Sweden’s Feminist Foreign Policy in a public lecture, 6PM, Sofitel, Place Jourdan, Brussels.

Register for the event

Due to increased security measures, we kindly request you to RSVP in advance and arrive 15 minutes before the start of the event. Please bring a photo ID.

Press is welcome at 5.30 for interviews on Feminist Foreign Policy.

The lecture will be livestreamed

**Pioneering in feminism – nationally and internationally**

When Margot Wallström took up her office as Foreign Minister after the Swedish election in October 2014, she launched a Feminist Foreign Policy.

- Sweden has a political history of national reform aimed at gender equality taking us to where we are right now. And now we need to take another step forward as we have seen for ourselves that gender equality makes a world of a difference for everyone, explains Margot Wallström.

In her public lecture on Monday evening, Margot Wallström will talk about the international potential of gender equality, about women's role in peace talks and conflict prevention and the responsibility of the EU in making a difference in the Union as well through its external relations.

She will also elaborate on the prerequisites of pursuing a Feminist Foreign Policy – on the systematic and strategic work within her own ministry.

The lecture is a co-arrangement between The German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU.

Time and place: Monday March 14, 6:00PM, Sofitel at Place Jourdan, Brussels



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Today is International Women's Day

Published 08 March 2016 Updated 08 March 2016

Equality between women and men is a fundamental aim of Swedish foreign policy. Ensuring that women and girls can enjoy their fundamental human rights is both an obligation within the framework of our international commitments, and a prerequisite for reaching Sweden's broader foreign policy goals on peace, and security and sustainable development.

The situation in the world calls for a feminist foreign policy that aims to strengthen women's rights, representation and access to resources.

On international women's day, join us in drawing attention to the #3rs of gender equality.

## Rights

The human rights of women and girls are violated all over the world. The full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls must become a reality, including by combating all forms of violence and discrimination that restrict their freedom of action.

## Representation

Women are still under-represented in influential positions in all areas of society and in all processes. Women's equal participation and influence in decision-making processes must be promoted at all levels and in all areas of society, including all stages of peace processes and peacebuilding. Research

shows that inclusive peace processes pave the way for a greater number of possible solutions that become better established and are more sustainable.

## Resources

Women and girls often lack social or economic rights, including access to and control of economic resources, quality education, land, inheritance rights, productive work and equal pay. Women and men must have the same power to shape their societies and their lives. Resources must be distributed differently to promote equal rights and opportunities for all. In global terms, a larger proportion of aid must go to promoting gender equality and women's rights.





Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to Baku, Azerbaijan

Published 11 February 2016 Updated 11 February 2016

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström's trip to Southern Caucasus continued on Tuesday with a visit to Baku, Azerbaijan. The visit began on Tuesday evening with a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Ali Hasanov.

On Wednesday morning, Ms Wallström held a breakfast meeting with representatives of women's organisations, where women's rights and opportunities for political influence, as well as violence against women, were discussed. After that Ms Wallström and the Swedish delegation met Sheik Allahshukur Pashazade, head of the Caucasus Muslims, and representatives of the Jewish and Christian faith communities, with whom he is successfully pursuing a platform for interfaith dialogue.

The day continued with a meeting with Azerbaijan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov. In connection with the meeting, a tax agreement aimed at avoiding double taxation and combating tax evasion was signed between Sweden and Azerbaijan. The visit in Baku concluded with a meeting in the Parliament with parliamentarians, the Speaker of the Parliament Ogtay Asadov and Deputy Speaker Bahar Muradova.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs visiting Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan

Published 10 February 2016 Updated 10 February 2016

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström is travelling in Southern Caucasus between Monday 8 February and Wednesday 10 February for visits in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Member of the Riksdag Kerstin Lundgren is also taking part.

The visit started on Monday in Tbilisi in Georgia. Ms Wallström first met Georgia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Mikheil Janelidze for talks on current issues and regional challenges. Then, Ms Wallström visited Tbilisi Public Service Hall to meet civil society actors such as journalists, human rights activists and representatives of LGBTQ organisations. After that, Ms Wallström met representatives of the opposition.

The visit in Tbilisi then continued with meetings with Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili, Speaker of the Parliament David Usupashvili, and in conclusion, Georgia's President Giorgi Margvelashvili.

The talks focused mainly on the reforms and changes that Georgia is carrying out as part of the process of establishing closer ties to the European Union and as a member of the EU's Eastern Partnership. In 2014, Georgia signed an Association Agreement and a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the EU.

"We can see a positive development in Georgia. The reform process is making progress, but challenges remain. This is why it is important for Sweden and the EU to continue to support Georgia in its rapprochement to the EU and in order to bring about a well-functioning society free of corruption and with transparent institutions and political processes," said Ms

Wallström.

Ms Wallström's visit in Southern Caucasus continued on Tuesday in Yerevan, Armenia. In the morning, Ms Wallström met representatives of organisations that work with democracy, gender equality and freedom of press issues to hear their perspectives on current issues and challenges. During the day, Ms Wallström met Minister of Foreign Affairs Edward Nalbandian and President Serzh Sargsyan. At the meeting with Mr Nalbandian, a tax agreement was signed between Sweden and Armenia, which will counteract double taxation and tax evasion. The purpose of the agreement is to increase economic and professional exchange between Sweden and Armenia by making it easier for Swedes to work in Armenia and vice versa.

The visit in Yerevan continued later in the day as Ms Wallström met with Armenian members of Parliament. In conclusion, Ms Wallström visited Tumo Centre for Creative Technologies, a place that offers young people free education after school in subjects such as design, programming and artistic activities.



Article

# Government to strengthen Arctic environmental policy

Published 25 January 2016 Updated 25 January 2016

The Government is now strengthening the Swedish environmental policy for the Arctic. As an Arctic country with high environmental ambitions, Sweden has an important role to play internationally.

A whole world is affected when the Arctic environment is threatened. The Government is now strengthening efforts to protect the natural environment in the Arctic. We want to see stronger climate efforts, legal protection for sensitive natural environments and prevention of the risks involved in drilling for oil and overfishing. This new focus for environmental policy in the Arctic is being presented today by Minister for Strategic Development Kristina Persson at the Arctic Frontiers conference.

The Arctic acts as the planet's refrigerator. Its enormous white expanses of ice and snow reflect large parts of the sun's rays back into space, thus stabilising the Earth's climate. The area is home to millions of people, including indigenous peoples, and ecosystems of global importance. The Arctic environment and its fate concerns us all, directly or indirectly.

Today, the natural environment in the Arctic is largely unprotected. Just a few decades ago this was not considered to be a major problem. The greenhouse effect was not yet making itself clearly felt and the northernmost expanses were difficult to access. But the situation has worsened in a short period of time.

The snow and ice in the Arctic is melting increasingly rapidly due to global warming. This increases accessibility and thus opportunities to exploit oil, gas, minerals and fish in this sensitive environment. At the same time, the fact that the ice is shrinking means that the reflection of solar radiation is

decreasing, fuelling global warming. The consequences could be catastrophic.

The new global climate agreement from Paris marks the start of a substantial increase in climate efforts in all countries. The agreement states that the global rise in temperature must be kept well below two degrees Celsius and that measures must be taken to keep the temperature below one and a half degrees. In order to achieve this goal, further decisions need to be taken in international climate work, including in Arctic cooperation.

The Government is now strengthening Sweden's environmental policy for the Arctic. As an Arctic country with a high level of environmental ambition, Sweden has an important role to play internationally. While we are making demands of other Arctic countries, the Government is taking responsibility at home. This is a basic premise for our proposals:

### **1. Stronger climate efforts**

The Arctic countries (Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Russia, Canada and the United States, all members of the Arctic Council) are responsible for a large proportion of global greenhouse gas emissions and have a major responsibility to reduce emissions. Sweden has pushed for a reduction in emissions of short-lived climate forcers, such as soot and methane. This is still important, but climate efforts must be broadened. The Government therefore wants to strengthen measures in the Arctic Council concerning climate and renewable energy.

### **2. Legal protection for sensitive natural environments**

There are serious shortcomings in the protection of the valuable Arctic environment. In particular, there is a lack of adequate protection of the marine environment, which is becoming increasingly accessible and vulnerable as the ice melts. This calls for efforts on a broad front. We are beginning this work to make progress. In the first week of February, all Arctic countries are invited to Sweden and the Government Offices to discuss the management of the marine environment in the Arctic. The Government is pushing for the Arctic countries to develop a network of protected environments, for the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to be supplemented with a new protective agreement and for other decision-making bodies to be as active as possible in putting protection in place.

### **3. Preventing the risks of drilling for oil**

Researchers have warned that offshore oil extraction in the Arctic is a high-

stakes undertaking. A large proportion of the world's oil resources must stay in the ground if we are to keep global warming as far below two degrees as possible. Extracting oil in the Arctic is both expensive and risky. An oil disaster could cause a great deal of damage to the sensitive environment. In recent times, a low global oil price has made drilling for oil in the Arctic an unprofitable business, but a low price in the short term is no lasting guarantee that the sensitive Arctic environment will be protected.

This is why it is crucial that we make demands of the oil companies, in terms of both economics and safety. Sweden wants to see robust regulations that ensure the highest level of protection. We want only companies that can assume the entire cost of a disaster to be granted permits to extract oil in the Arctic. The costs must not be shifted onto the environment or the world population through environmental damage, or onto the tax payers in the Arctic countries. In practice, these are requirements that together can protect the Arctic from the risks of drilling for oil.

#### **4. Preventing overfishing**

The parts of the Arctic Ocean and seabeds that have historically been covered by a permanent layer of ice must now be protected. The Government considers that commercial fishing in the central northern Arctic Ocean should not be permitted until a regional organisation for fisheries management is established to ensure that fishing is carried out in a sustainable way. Sweden believes that a precautionary approach should be taken and that consideration should be given to the ecosystems when designing this fisheries management. Good management is informed by decisions made on scientific grounds with a long-term perspective.

This is how the Government is taking the next step in the international arena to strengthen efforts to protect the Arctic environment. With legal protection of sensitive environments and clearer requirements in the area of oil prospecting and fishing, we can protect the natural environment in the Arctic – and by doing so improve the chances of today's children living a good life in the future. The world needs countries that move the environment further up the agenda. Sweden is one such country.

Åsa Romson, Minister for Climate and the Environment

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Kristina Persson, Minister for Strategic Development



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Focus on peace and development when Margot Wallström and Peter Hultqvist visited Mali

Published 07 January 2016 Updated 07 January 2016

The peace agreement in Mali, talks with representatives of the Malian Government and a visit to the Swedish detachment in Camp Nobel as part of the UN stabilisation mission, MINUSMA. These were some of the points on the agenda when Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist, together with Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Micael Bydén, visited Mali on 5–7 January.

Ms Wallström and Mr Hultqvist's visit to Mali comes at an important time for the country. A peace agreement was signed last June and is now being implemented with the support of the UN stabilisation mission, MINUSMA.

During their visit, the ministers met Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, Prime Minister Modibo Keïta, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdoulaye Diop and Minister of Defence Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly for talks on peace, security and development in the country. Peace and security and the implementation of the peace agreement were also the focus when Ms Wallström and Mr Hultqvist visited the Swedish unit in Timbuktu.

"For sustainable peace, it is important that the peace agreement is implemented in an inclusive manner. Women must have a role in the peace process," says Ms Wallström, who with Mr Hultqvist also met local women's organisations in Timbuktu.







Article from Ministry of Defence, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# The Government presented Sweden's support to France

Published 16 December 2015 Updated 16 December 2015

Sweden attaches great importance to the EU as a community of solidarity. It is in our security policy interest that Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union and the EU's security policy as such are credible. This requires that the bilateral assistance and support requested by France is now credible and fit-for-purpose. Sweden will therefore play its part, as outlined at a press briefing by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist today.

As a follow-up of France's request under Article 42 (7) of the Treaty on European Union and additional support in the fight against ISIL, an inventory of possible Swedish contributions has been made. The starting point for this is that it must be requested, fit-for-purpose, effective and efficient, credible, sustainable over time, in accordance with international law, based on a risk analysis and based on broad consensus and available Swedish resources, in terms of both personnel and funding.

In an initial package, Sweden can offer the following:

- 50–100 SAC hours (strategic airlift capability) will be placed at France's disposal.
- Tactical air transport (1 TP84) for use in MINUSMA within the framework of a Nordic rotation in which Sweden would take over from Norway and Denmark in spring 2017.
- A number of staff officers for MINUSMA or UNTSO.
- A reinforced Swedish contribution to EUTM Mali is being looked into, if

possible in cooperation with others.

- A request concerning support in the form of military equipment is being processed under a separate decision procedure.

In addition to this, there is the Swedish military training contribution comprising 35 people who have been on the ground in northern Iraq since August 2015 and will remain there in 2016 if the Riksdag gives its approval. Sweden's contribution also includes personnel stationed at staff headquarters in Baghdad and Erbil. In Mali, Sweden is participating in MINUSMA with a contribution of 250 people. The current mandate extends until 30 June 2016. An extension of Sweden's contribution is expected until the end of June 2017. Sweden currently has 10 people placed with the EUTM in Mali and has decided to continue its contribution of two staff officers with the EUMAM in the Central African Republic.

In spring 2016, the conditions for additional Swedish support will be regularly looked into on the basis of the needs that exist and that emerge in the anti-ISIL coalition, and on the basis of what other countries have contributed, as well as in line with the aforementioned criteria. A review will then take place in autumn 2016.

Moreover, Sweden is providing extensive humanitarian support and development cooperation. Sweden's humanitarian support to Syria since 2011 has amounted to SEK 1.9 billion, and in 2015 support amounted to SEK 577 million. The Government is now raising its level of ambition by drawing up a whole new type of aid strategy for the Syrian crisis, comprising SEK 1.7 billion for the period 2016–2020. SEK 16 million will go to the Syria Recovery Trust Fund, which meets the needs of the population in the opposition-controlled areas. In addition, support is being given to Birgitta Holst Alani's facilitator role in the Intra-Syrian Contact Group for the Continuity of Public Services, Reconstruction and Development, and the opposition's efforts to agree and take part in the UN process are being supported by Special Envoy Niklas Kebabian. Moreover, Sweden is working to strengthen women's participation in the UN-led negotiations.

Since 2014, Sweden has given more than SEK 300 million in humanitarian support to Iraq, in addition to major Swedish non-earmarked core support to the UN and other international organisations, which in total makes Sweden one of the largest donors to the region. Development cooperation will be expanded by SEK 40 million in 2016 for capacity building of central and local government in Iraq. Sweden is also contributing USD 4 million to the UNDP stabilisation fund (approx. SEK 32 million). In addition to this,

possibilities are being looked into for providing support to strengthen the rule of law and the security sector in Iraq, and to contribute to the country's long-term stabilisation. (One possibility could be a civilian ESFP operation targeting capacity building in these areas.)



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström hosts high-level meeting on women's role in peace processes

Published 15 December 2015 Updated 15 December 2015

Some of the world's top women peace mediators and representatives of civil society, foreign governments, the UN and the EU have gathered in Stockholm for two days to discuss women's participation in peace processes and mediation. The high-level meeting is part of the Government's initiative to establish a Swedish network of women mediators, which is an important focus area of Sweden's feminist foreign policy agenda.

'More Women, More Peace – the Stockholm High-Level Meeting on Inclusive Peace Processes', hosted by the Swedish Government and taking place on 15–16 December, aims to identify tangible measures for more inclusive and sustainable peace processes. Delegates include prominent mediators from peace processes in the Philippines, Yemen, Afghanistan, Uganda, Nepal, Burundi, Timor-Leste, Sudan and Liberia and other parts of world. Other delegates include representatives of civil society, foreign governments, the UN and the EU.

## Women still excluded from peace processes

Fifteen years after the adoption of UN Security Council resolution on women, peace and security (UNSCR 1325), women are still largely excluded from formal peace processes and international mediation efforts. Some

progress has been made in recent years. But between 1992 and 2011, less than ten per cent of the those sitting at the negotiating table – and only four per cent of those who signed the peace agreements – were women. Of the peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2014, only 18 per cent included references to women and gender equality.

Yet, research shows that women's participation in peace processes and mediation increases the likelihood of a peace agreement being concluded, adhered to and more sustainable.

In a world where almost half of all peace agreements collapse within the first five years, and where protracted conflicts including in Syria and Libya have led to the largest refugee flows since the Second World War, there is a great need to strengthen our efforts in peacebuilding operations and sustainable peace processes.

## Launch of Swedish network of women mediators

As part of broader efforts to support sustainable peace processes, the Government has initiated a Swedish network of women mediators, an initiative led by the Folke Bernadotte Academy. The aim is to increase the number of Swedish women in international peace processes and strengthen Sweden's ability to contribute effectively to sustainable peacebuilding. The initiative will also link up with other international networks of women mediators and contribute to developing the Nordic network, launched in Oslo on 27 November.

The high-level meeting opened on Tuesday 15 December with a joint dinner. Roundtable discussions, lunch and a public seminar are scheduled for Wednesday 16 December.

Follow the discussion on social media at [#MoreWomenMorePeace](#)



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Tunisia is showing the way

Published 10 December 2015 Updated 10 December 2015

Five years ago, Tunisia's population wanted change, dignity and democracy. The Tunisian Revolution marked the beginning of a process of change that is still under way in parts of the Arab world, and that has also come to greatly affect Sweden and the rest of Europe. Tunisia succeeded where many other countries in the region failed: they achieved democracy by peaceful means. Today, the well-deserved Nobel Peace Prize will be awarded to the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet for its decisive contributions in the wake of the Tunisian Revolution.

The Quartet, comprising Tunisia's leading trade union, employer organisation, the human rights organisation Tunisian Human Rights League, and the Tunisian Order of Lawyers took a leading role in uniting a society that was being torn apart by tensions and instability. It was a strong driving force behind the adoption of a new democratic constitution that was unprecedented in the region. This took place at a time when the democratic process in Tunisia was about to collapse.

Following free and democratic elections late last year, Tunisia is now governed by a president and a broad coalition government. One third of the members of the Tunisian parliament are women – one of the highest proportions in the region. Women generally play an important role in politics and public life, and gender equality is emphasised in the constitution, although many challenges still remain in this area.

When I took office as Minister for Foreign Affairs, I decided to visit Tunisia at an early stage to show Sweden's support for the path that the country has chosen. During my visit in February, I met representatives of the Government, civil society and the business sector for talks on the country's political and economic development, security in the neighbourhood and human rights. I left Tunis inspired and full of hope that Tunisia, despite great challenges, faces good prospects of maintaining and developing democracy

and stability in a region where these values in particular are in short supply.

The close relations between Sweden and Tunisia were clearly displayed during the State Visit by President Essebsi to Sweden in early November. During the State Visit, it was announced that we will reopen the Swedish Embassy in Tunis. Our presence on the ground will open a new chapter in our relations with Tunisia and provide us with opportunities to intensify our support for democracy and promote the economic development of the country.

Tunisia is facing major challenges: in the area of security, where the acts of terrorism in Tunis in November reminded us of the forces at work in the region and the challenges involved in counteracting them; in the economic area, where reforms are needed and many people are waiting for improvements in daily life, not least the younger generation that courageously confronted the old authoritarian regime; and in the institutional area, where considerable progress has been made, but where the constitution's promises need to be converted into practical action.

With a democratically elected leadership, an active civil society and international cooperation, there are good chances of overcoming these challenges. Sweden is contributing in several ways. We have comprehensive bilateral cooperation to strengthen democracy and respect for human rights. Swedish companies employ more than 5 000 Tunisians, a figure that is increasing.

A pluralistic and stable Tunisia can continue to inspire the region's youth, women and men, who, through concerted efforts, chose the path of democracy. It is not always easy, but it is always right. The choice of the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet for the Nobel Peace Prize is a recognition of all the forces in the region that strive for democratic change through peaceful means. We welcome and look forward to the Prize Laureates' traditional visit to Stockholm after the award ceremony in Oslo.

Margot Wallström  
Minister for Foreign Affairs



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Cooperation on reception of refugees theme for meeting of foreign ambassadors in Stockholm

Published 30 November 2015 Updated 30 November 2015

The EU needs a new system for the reception of refugees. This was the message from Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, as he, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson met the foreign ambassadors in Stockholm on 26 November. He also spoke about the importance of climate change and cited increasing employment as the Government's top priority.

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven began by expressing the Swedish Government's sympathy and solidarity with those affected by terrorist attacks. Mr Löfven stated that the refugee crisis could be handled better by the EU. Sweden, which has taken in 80 000 refugees in the last two months alone, has reached a point where it is necessary for refugees to seek asylum in other European countries. "We should start to discuss a new, sustainable system for refugee reception in the EU, based on a permanent distribution system," he said.

## One of the world's first fossil-free welfare countries

There is also a great deal that is positive happening in the world, Mr Löfven pointed out. Extreme poverty has been more than halved worldwide, for example.

"In just four days we will meet in Paris to discuss climate change. Sweden's



aim is a global, fair and legally binding agreement that keeps global warming below two degrees. He stressed that this is a job that begins at home.

“Sweden will be one of the world’s first fossil-free welfare nations. This is morally right, but also economically smart. Countries at the forefront will be the winners – not those who wait until the last moment.” Mr Löfven emphasised Sweden’s continued strong commitment to international cooperation, and the fact that Sweden will continue to be a strong voice for democracy, equality and solidarity.

## Increased employment priority goal

The Prime Minister concluded his speech with a few words about the Government’s first year in power.

“We have put more and new jobs at the top of our agenda. The key components are investments in housing and infrastructure, increased cooperation for more and growing companies, and improved job matching and skills. The objective of increased employment becomes even more important in light of the ongoing refugee crisis, Mr Löfven said.

“Everyone who can work should work. Together, we will work Sweden out of the crisis and into the future.” Looking back at the Government’s first year, the Prime Minister also said that he sees greater willingness to cooperate across party lines.

“The Government has been clear from the start in our desire to gather cross-party majorities. I welcome a new era in Swedish politics – guided by responsibility and determination,” he said.

## Sweden will continue to take responsibility, but cannot stand alone

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström took the floor after the Prime Minister. She began by quoting writer Stig Dagerman.

“He wrote: ‘In times of no hope there is no worse prison than the future’. We must therefore not lose hope.” She noted that the world is facing a range of challenges and that, as the world’s sixth largest aid donor in absolute terms and the largest per capita recipient of refugees, Sweden is continuing to take great responsibility for global development.

“Our objective of giving one per cent of our GNI in aid remains in place.” Regarding the reception of refugees, she echoed Mr Löfven’s view that Sweden cannot stand alone. She also emphasised that Sweden’s reception of refugees must enable children seeking asylum to have the same opportunities as Swedish children.

“The Government has now agreed that no more than thirty per cent of the aid budget will go to migration costs. “Sweden will continue to be an active and generous member of the international community,” she said.

Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson also attended the meeting.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Wallström and Linkevičius paid a joint visit to Ukraine

Published 23 November 2015 Updated 23 November 2015

This week, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström visited Ukraine with Lithuania's Minister of Foreign Affairs Linas Linkevičius for a busy three-day programme.

The visit began at Maidan Square to honour the victims of the events of winter 2014. During meetings with President Poroshenko, Prime Minister Yatsenyuk and Minister of Foreign Affairs Klimkin, our countries expressed their strong support for Ukraine's EU integration, which is demonstrated through our commitment to the Eastern Partnership. A cooperation agreement between Sweden and Lithuania was concluded on support for training in Eastern Ukraine.

At the meeting with students at the University of Kyiv, the atmosphere was one of great confidence in the future, as it was during the meetings with young parliamentarians and representatives of civil society organisations. In talks with the leader of the Crimean Tatars, Mustafa Dzhemilev, it was made clear that the Russian annexation of Crimea is not accepted. In a meeting with Vira Savchenko, sister of Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko currently imprisoned in Russia, the EU's demands that Russia immediately release her were stressed.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Successful State Visit from Tunisia

Published 06 November 2015 Updated 09 November 2015

Tunisia's President Béji Caïd Essebsi concluded his three-day State Visit to Sweden today. The President and his wife were here at the invitation of the King and Queen. Tunisia's Minister for Foreign Affairs also took part in the visit and was received by Margot Wallström at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. It was announced during the visit that Sweden would open an embassy in Tunisia, and a number of bilateral cooperation agreements were signed.

Following a welcoming ceremony for the President and his delegation at the Royal Palace on the first day of the State Visit, the two foreign ministers met to discuss Swedish–Tunisian relations. Democratic development in the country, anti-terrorism efforts, gender issues and trade were the topics discussed between the two ministers.

On day two of the visit, President Essebsi met Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. It was announced following the meeting that Sweden would open an embassy in Tunisia. A broad cooperation agreement was signed between Sweden and Tunisia. The President, the King and Minister for Infrastructure Anna Johansson also took part during the day in a trade forum organised by the Tunisian Embassy and Business Sweden.

On Friday, the President visited Ericsson in Kista. The visit then continued to Uppsala, where the President laid a wreath on Dag Hammarskjöld's grave in the presence of the King, Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Information Technology Mehmet Kaplan and Minister for Public Administration Ardalán Shekarabi. A cooperation agreement concerning decentralisation was also signed during the day between the Swedish

Association of Local Authorities and Regions and their Tunisian counterparts.

Press release: Sweden to open Embassy in Tunisia



Article from Ministry of Defence, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström and Peter Hultqvist visited Iraq on 2–3 November

Published 04 November 2015 Updated 04 November 2015

On 3 November, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist concluded a joint visit to Iraq. One key event was a visit to the Swedish contribution to the military multinational operation in northern Iraq. Developments in Iraq are disturbing and in many ways, the country is at a decisive crossroads. The purpose of the visit was to express support for the country's pro-reform forces and to highlight the scope and sustainability of the Swedish commitment to Iraq, both bilaterally and via the international coalition against ISIL.

In addition to visiting the Swedish military personnel on the ground in northern Iraq, the ministers also met representatives of the Iraqi government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Erbil.

The visit began on 2 November in Baghdad, where the two ministers had meetings with President Fuad Masum, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament Salim al-Jabouri, Minister of Defence Khaled al-Obeidi and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ibrahim al-Jaafari, who hosted the visit.

## Meetings in Iraqi Kurdistan

On Monday evening, the visit continued in Erbil, the capital of the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan in northern Iraq. The ministers attended a dinner hosted by Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, at which government representatives of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) parties took part.

On Tuesday, Ms Wallström and Mr Hultqvist took part in a meeting with Minister for the Interior and acting Minister of Peshmerga Affairs Karim Sinjari and Head of KRG Foreign Relations Falah Mustafa Bakir. The ministers also met representatives of civil society and of the Assyrian, Yazidi and Turkmen minorities in Iraq. On Tuesday, the ministers also met KRG President Masoud Barzani for talks on developments in Iraqi Kurdistan.

### **Visit to Swedish military force**

The trip to Iraq concluded with a visit to the regional coalition headquarters and the Swedish military force that, since the summer, has been operating within the framework of the international coalition against ISIL. The Swedish force consists of 35 persons, whose task is to train the Iraqi armed forces in the fight against ISIL.

Sweden has close relations with Iraq. The countries have extensive people-to-people exchanges. Close to two per cent of the Swedish population has Iraqi roots. Since 2014, Sweden has provided Iraq with more than SEK 300 million in humanitarian support, thereby making it one of the largest bilateral donors to Iraq. The humanitarian support, which is mainly channelled via the UN on the ground, is crucial to relieving the difficult humanitarian situation, with 8.6 million people in need of humanitarian support. It is also vital in trying to avoid even more Iraqis seeing no other choice than to make their way to Europe. In addition, Sweden has engaged in bilateral development cooperation with Iraq, focusing on democracy and human rights, and support to civil society.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström commemorates UN's 70th anniversary

Published 23 October 2015 Updated 23 October 2015

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström is visiting New York on 21–23 October to take part in celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the UN. During her visit, Ms Wallström will speak at the Security Council's open debate on the peace process in the Middle East. Ms Wallström will also take part in two events organised by Sweden: one on women's participation in the peace process in Mali and one on women as peace actors in Syria.

Through its political and financial support, Sweden is a leading actor in the agenda for women, peace and security. In its feminist foreign policy, Sweden prioritises women's participation in peace processes and the fight against impunity for sexual violence in conflicts. Ms Wallström, together with Hans Blix, will also take part in a seminar on disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Ms Wallström's speech at the Security Council's open debate on the Middle East peace process

Ms Wallström's speech at event on women's participation in the Mali peace process

Ms Wallström's Opening Statement at side event in the UN: "Syrian Women Peacebuilders"





Article from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

## “Intense, fruitful days in Vilnius” – The State Visit to Lithuania 7-9 October

Published 13 October 2015 Updated 13 October 2015

Friday 9 October was the final day of the Swedish State Visit to Lithuania. Since the State Visit began on Wednesday 7 October, the Swedish delegation has had a fruitful and busy visit on the other side of the Baltic Sea.

The theme of the State Visit was ‘The Baltic Sea unites us’. Environment, sustainability, research and innovation have been in focus. Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg began his part of the State Visit by discussing the business and investment climate with business sector representatives, Minister of Economy Evaldas Gustas and Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevičius.

Following a warm welcome by Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė, the King and Queen, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Mr Damberg visited Antakalnis Cemetery to honour the victims of the struggle for independence and place a wreath there. The King and Queen stressed Sweden’s sympathy and solidarity with the Lithuanian people’s struggle throughout history.

The first evening concluded with a banquet at the Presidential Palace; before it commenced, the King and Queen inaugurated the ‘AccessAbility’ photo exhibition, that highlights openness and inclusion through personal stories by Swedes and Lithuanians who live with impairments.

The second day continued in the same spirit: the King and Queen began their day by meeting the business community and discussing the Lithuanian business climate and the opportunities and challenges Swedish companies who become established there may encounter. Ms Wallström, Mr Damberg, the CEO of Business Sweden Ylva Berg, and a number of other business representatives were also present.

This was then followed by Swedish Business Forum and Awards, where the King presented awards to business community actors who had distinguished themselves in various sectors. Afterwards, the King and Mr Damberg continued to the company TEO LT AB, which is an industry leader in ICT and wireless connection. Parallel with these visits, Queen Silvia and Ms Wallström took part in a round-table meeting on trafficking with a Lithuanian parliamentary committee.

The conclusion of the second day of the State Visit also marked the end of a successful visit for Mr Damberg and Ms Wallström, who said about the visit:

- We have had two intense and fruitful days in Vilnius. I met my foreign minister colleague, Linas Linkevičius, and we announced that we will visit Ukraine jointly in November. I also visited the parliament, met students and took part in a round-table discussion on trafficking.

The King and Queen and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist began their third and final day on the sand dunes of the Curonian Spit, near the harbour town of Klaipėda, where experts from Region Skåne talked about the cooperation around the Baltic Sea to check negative climate impact along the coast.

In addition to environment discussions, the visit to the Curonian Spit included a stop at the local dolphinarium, which provided information about the dolphin therapy developed to help children with various types of impairments. Later in the afternoon, a visit was paid to the NordBalt project's transformer station ahead of the ground-breaking operational launch in Vilnius on 14 December, which will lead to a change of direction in the energy flow on the Baltic market.

The final State Visit stop was at the Amber Museum in Palanga, where President Grybauskaitė was warmly thanked for an inspiring visit in the spirit of sustainability, research and innovation.



Article from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

## State Visit to Lithuania begins

Published 07 October 2015 Updated 08 October 2015

The three-day State Visit to Lithuania of Their Majesties The King and Queen of Sweden begins today. The Swedish Government is represented by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg and (on Friday) by Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist. A Swedish business delegation will also take part in the Visit.

Relations between Sweden and Lithuania are very good, and have been so since Lithuania regained its independence. Sweden was the first country to open an embassy in Vilnius in August 1991.

The Swedish delegation was met when it landed today with the same genuine and warm welcome as during the Swedish State Visit to Lithuania 23 years ago. A welcome ceremony took place at the Presidential Palace.

Ms Wallström and Mr Damberg also participated as the King placed a wreath at the Freedom Monument in the Antakalnis Cemetery to honour the victims of the struggle for independence.

The King and Queen, Ms Wallström and Mr Damberg later visited the Seimas, the Lithuanian Parliament, for a meeting with Speaker Loreta Graužinienė.

During the morning, Ms Wallström met with her Lithuanian colleague Minister of Foreign Affairs Linas Linkevičius.

Mr Damberg met Minister of Energy Rokas Masiulis.

## Accompanying business delegation

Sweden is by far the largest foreign investor in Lithuania, accounting for over a quarter of the market. Some 30 business leaders are taking part in the delegation in connection with the State Visit. The delegation's day started early with Mr Damberg, discussing the business and investment climate in Lithuania with Chairman of the Bank of Lithuania, Vitas Vasiliauskas, Minister of Economy Evaldas Gustas and Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevičius.

The President will host a dinner during the evening. The State Visit will continue tomorrow and conclude on Friday.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Implementing the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development, A call to action

Published 26 September 2015 Updated 14 October 2016

The world must get off to a flying start in realizing the new ambitious and transformative sustainable development agenda.

We, the presidents and prime ministers of Brazil, Colombia, Germany, Liberia, South Africa, Sweden, Tanzania, Timor-Leste and Tunisia, have come together today in an initiative aimed at supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We believe that the effective and universal implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires efforts at all levels, and across all sectors. Government's efforts alone will not suffice. But we are committed to lead by example and we pledge to do our share.

We will work actively during the coming months to rally support for the implementation of the Agenda. We will promote the sharing of experiences and best practices and a continuous engagement at the highest political level around the world.

The 2030 Agenda is an agenda of the people, by the people and for the people. We therefore invite all stakeholders, governments, parliamentarians, civil society, business sector, labor unions and academia to join us in calling for action. We need sustained engagement, dedication and leadership at all levels to achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development in all its dimensions by 2030.

We will make it our joint mission to ensure that no one is left behind!



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden taking responsibility to implement the UN global goals for sustainability

Published 25 September 2015 Updated 25 September 2015

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson and Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin are attending the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York. On 25–27 September, the new global Sustainable Development Goals will be adopted by all UN Member States.

“Sweden will take a leading role also in implementing the new UN Sustainable Development Goals. Poverty reduction, environmental and climate action, and peacebuilding go hand-in-hand. Sweden will lead the way with a coherent policy that takes into account the perspective of poor people, human rights and planetary boundaries. Efforts to achieve the global Sustainable Development Goals in Sweden are starting now,” says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

During the summit, the Prime Minister will deliver a speech, attend meetings, seminars and roundtable discussions, and have bilateral talks with the heads of government of other countries.

“These global goals are needed for the countries of the world to work together to stop and prevent conflicts and refugee crises. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without peace, security and respect for

human rights. The global goals give us fifteen years of opportunities for a better world,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

“It is extremely positive that the world is now agreed on the importance of sustainable development. An ambitious climate agreement in Paris this December is our first opportunity to show what this means in practice. All countries have a responsibility to contribute to climate change adaptation. By taking responsibility at home, Sweden is taking the lead and showing that adaptation is both possible and profitable,” says Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson.

From a Swedish perspective, it is important to underline three dimensions of sustainability – economic, social and environmental. The rights perspective, including freedom from discrimination, and gender equality in particular, is a top priority, as are employment and the goal of decent work for all.

“In unsettled times in which the challenges faced by the world can sometimes seem insurmountable, the fact that the countries of the world have now come together and shown that change in a positive direction is possible inspires hope and confidence, as does the fact that we stand united in the battle against poverty, repression and climate change,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

In connection with the summit, a large number of charity events and a music gala – the Global Citizen Festival – will take place in Central Park in New York. The festival will focus on inequalities in the world and access to clean water and sanitation.





Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström received Selahattin Demirtaş

Published 27 August 2015 Updated 27 August 2015

Last week, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström met the leader of the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) from Turkey.

“HDP is an important political power for shaping the future of Turkey. Sweden and Turkey have a strategic partnership and Sweden supports Turkey’s closer ties with the EU, which require a deepening of democracy and the rule of law. It is now of the utmost importance to resume the peace process and the ceasefire,” says Ms Wallström.

In light of the current situation, Ms Wallström also urged HDP to continue contributing to the resumption of the peace process.

Mr Demirtaş expressed his appreciation for the meeting with Ms Wallström. He repeated his message that the peace process and the ceasefire must be resumed and that violence and weapons cannot solve the conflict. Against this background, he welcomed the fact that Sweden – which has a special role in Turkey by virtue of the high level of credibility it enjoys – was urging for the resumption of peace negotiations.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs received Marshall Islands president and Kenyan foreign minister

Published 25 August 2015 Updated 25 August 2015

On Tuesday, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström met Marshall Islands President Christopher J. Loeak and Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs Amina Mohamed.

Marshall Islands President Christopher J. Loeak was received for talks on issues such as the challenges of climate change. President Loeak is visiting Sweden on 23–27 August to take part in World Water Week.

Margot Wallström and Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs Amina Mohamed held talks on global issues of common interest. The ministers discussed trade relations between Sweden and Kenya, developments in Somalia, development cooperation and the new aid strategy that the Swedish Government is working to produce.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström received US senators

Published 19 August 2015 Updated 19 August 2015

Today, Wednesday 19 August, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström received US Senators John McCain, Sheldon Whitehouse and John Barrasso for discussions on topical foreign policy issues.

The discussions focused on the situation in Ukraine and relations with Russia, countering violent extremism and the Iran nuclear agreement.

The US senators, John McCain (R), Sheldon Whitehouse (D) and John Barrasso (R), are visiting Sweden as part of a tour. Among those they will meet in Sweden are Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and representatives of the Swedish Armed Forces.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

## Indian State Visit concluded

Published 04 June 2015 Updated 04 June 2015

On the evening of 2 June, India's President Shri Pranab Mukherjee left Sweden following a State Visit of three days. The President was in Sweden at the invitation of HM the King. The Government was represented, with the majority of ministers participating. The main themes of the visit were innovations and sustainable development, with a focus on urban development, science and research.

India is one of the leading countries in Asia, the world's fourth largest economy and an emerging global actor. The State Visit by the Indian President – the first ever – was therefore an important milestone in our bilateral relations.

The State Visit began on Sunday with the traditional welcoming ceremony at the Inner Courtyard of the Royal Palace. The King and the President inspected a guard of honour from the Life Guards and many members of the Government, as well as other Swedish public representatives, were present to welcome the President.

Monday began with a visit to the Riksdag, where the President was received by the Speaker of the Riksdag and met with Members of the Riksdag.

In the morning, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven also received the President for talks at Rosenbad. Mr Mukherjee and Mr Löfven discussed issues such as growing trade between Sweden and India and broad bilateral cooperation covering such areas as the environment, renewable energy and health. Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson, Minister for Foreign

Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg, Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist and Minister for Housing and Urban Development Mehmet Kaplan also took part in the talks.

In connection with the meeting at Rosenbad, a number of agreements between India and Sweden were signed, including a memorandum of understanding on sustainable urban development. The aim of the memorandum of understanding is to promote cooperation on matters concerning sustainable and integrated urban planning and land use, waste management, sustainable transport systems, water and sanitation.

Minister for Housing and Urban Development Mehmet Kaplan joined the President and the King later in the afternoon for a boat tour of Hammarby Sjöstad. During the boat tour, a roundtable discussion was held with business representatives on how cities can be built in more sustainable and environmentally friendly ways.

Sustainable cities in focus during the Indian State Visit

Helene Hellmark Knutsson, Minister for Higher Education and Research, was present at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, when a number of cooperation agreements were signed between Indian and Swedish higher education institutions.

On Monday evening, the King and Queen hosted a gala dinner for the President.

## Visit to Karolinska Institutet and Uppsala University

The theme on Tuesday, the final day of the visit, was mainly research and science. Minister Helene Hellmark Knutsson was in attendance when the President and the King and Queen visited Karolinska Institutet. The focus lay on scientific cooperation, and included visits to Nobel Forum and Aula Medica. The President was also given a presentation of Nya Karolinska Solna (NKS) and Hagastaden.

Before lunch, Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg took part in a roundtable discussion between representatives of the Swedish and Indian business sectors. The President and the King were also present.

Mr Damberg gave a speech entitled *India-Sweden Partnership – Co-creating a Brighter Future*.

In connection with the business forum, the President announced that Swedish passport holders will now be granted an 'eTourist visa' when visiting India, leading to more expedient visa handling for Swedish citizens.

In the afternoon, the President visited Uppsala University together with Crown Princess Victoria, Prince Daniel and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. Ms Wallström gave the opening address and the President held a lecture on the theme 'Tagore and Gandhi: Do they have contemporary relevance for Global Peace?'

Speech by Margot Wallström at Uppsala University

On Tuesday evening, Ms Wallström was in attendance when Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel bid farewell to the President at Arlanda airport.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Historic State Visit from India

Published 28 May 2015 Updated 28 May 2015

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, will pay a State Visit to Sweden from 31 May to 2 June 2015 at the invitation of His Majesty the King. The Government will be represented, with the majority of ministers participating. The main themes of the visit are innovations and sustainable development, with a focus on urban development, science and research.

India is one of the leading countries in Asia, the world's fourth largest economy and an emerging global actor. The State Visit by the Indian President – the first ever – is an important milestone in our bilateral relations.

## Focus of the State Visit

The focus of the State Visit will be on creating conditions for greater exchange in the areas of trade and science, and strengthening Sweden's presence in the Indian market.

There is growing demand in India concerning issues such as innovation, urban development and sustainable development. The State Visit will provide the opportunity to promote potential business opportunities in these areas in both directions.

Sweden already has broad cooperation with India in a number of areas: environment, renewable energy, research, health, etc. This cooperation will be deepened further in connection with the visit, which will include the signing of a number of cooperation agreements.

## Programme points

India's President will land in Stockholm on Sunday afternoon and will be welcomed at Arlanda Airport by Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel. The King and Queen will receive the President at the Royal Mews for a horse-drawn cortège to the Royal Palace, where the traditional welcoming ceremony will take place. Representatives of the Riksdag and the Government will be present.

Monday's programme will begin with a visit to the Riksdag and a meeting with Speaker of the Riksdag Urban Ahlin. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will then welcome the President at Rosenbad. Stockholm City will host a lunch at Stockholm City Hall, during which sustainable urban development will be the focus of discussions. The afternoon programme will continue along the same theme with a visit to Hammarby Sjöstad. Minister for Housing and Urban Development Mehmet Kaplan will take part. In the evening, the King and Queen will host a banquet at the Palace.

The theme for Tuesday will be research and science, with a visit to Karolinska Institutet, with Minister for Higher Education and Research Helène Hellmark Knutsson in attendance. This will be followed by seminars and meetings with Swedish and Indian business representatives. Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg will also take part in the programme.

The programme will continue in the afternoon in Uppsala, where the President will deliver a speech at Uppsala University. Crown Princess Victoria, Prince Daniel and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will be present.

The State Visit will conclude late on Tuesday afternoon.

Follow the visit on social media: use #sweindia2015





Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden celebrates 20 years of EU membership

Published 12 May 2015 Updated 19 May 2015

Saturday 9 May marked 20 years since Sweden became a member of the European Union along with Finland and Austria. Sweden's twenty-year history of EU membership has demonstrated the possibilities and advantages of being part of the Union.

The enlargement of the EU has been crucial for peace, sustainable growth and prosperity in Europe - as recognised by the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the EU. The EU has become the world's largest integrated economy, with a population of more than 500 million. Because of the internal market, Swedes can live, travel, study, work and retire wherever they like in the EU. These are just some of the many examples of the impact EU membership has had on Sweden so far.

Europe Day is celebrated throughout Europe on 9 May. On this day in 1950, French foreign minister Robert Schuman presented a plan for how to avoid further armed conflict in Europe. The Schuman Declaration laid the foundation for what would later become the European Union: the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), of which both France and Germany were members. Joint control over the production of the raw materials that were so crucial to the arms industry - coal and steel - aimed to make it impossible for the countries concerned to start re-arming for war.

France and Germany, together with Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Italy, signed the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community - an organisation that in 1967 came to be known as the European Communities (EC). Sweden submitted a formal application for membership of the EC in July 1991. Two years later the accession

negotiations were opened, and on 24 July 1994 the Treaty of Accession was signed at the European Council in Corfu. Since then a further 13 countries have joined, and the EU now has 28 Member States.

To mark Europe Day, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström took part in a seminar at Europahuset on Friday 8 May on the topic 'Sweden's first 20 years in the EU - lessons and challenges for the future'. Ms Wallström presented the Government's EU policy and discussed the developments and challenges in the EU and their significance for Sweden.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden celebrates 20 years of EU membership

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Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs visited Washington DC

Published 02 February 2015 Updated 18 May 2015

On 29 December, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström visited her US colleague John Kerry in Washington DC.

"The US is a key global actor with whom Sweden has very good relations. I very much look forward to meeting my counterparts in Washington to discuss how Sweden and the US can further strengthen their cooperation," Ms Wallström said ahead of her trip.

Topics discussed at the meeting included how the good relations between Sweden and the US can be further developed in areas such as climate and energy issues, trade and gender equality. The serious situations in Ukraine and Syria were also discussed.

Ms Wallström said that they were meeting at a time when the world seemed to be in peril. She felt there are many issues that needed attention and which were their responsibility to discuss, including Ebola, extremism and violence, and conflicts around the world. All things considered, she felt that there was a long agenda for them to work through.

Later in the day, Ms Wallström took part in a meeting with US Vice President Joe Biden and also met with Susan Rice, National Security Advisor to Barack Obama.

During her two-day visit to Washington DC, Ms Wallström took part in several seminars and roundtable discussions with representatives of universities and think tanks, including the United States Institute of Peace, where she spoke about feminist foreign policy.

U.S. Department of State: Remarks With Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom Before Their Meeting



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström received Philip Hammond

Published 20 November 2014 Updated 18 May 2015

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström today received her British counterpart Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond.

Discussions included the bilateral relations between Sweden and the UK, the situation in Russia and Ukraine, the situation in the Middle East, and current UN and EU issues.

Ms Wallström stressed the importance of peace and security, respect for international law and the promotion of human rights in the European neighbourhood and elsewhere.

She also called attention to the importance of close cooperation on these issues with the UK in the EU and in other international forums, and the close ties between our countries - past and present.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden raises profile on disarmament

Published 10 October 2014 Updated 18 May 2015

On Tuesday, Sweden spoke at the United Nations General Assembly First Committee, which deals with disarmament issues. Sweden announced that it will take an active part in the initiative on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

Since nuclear weapons were used for the first, and last, time almost 70 years ago against Hiroshima and Nagasaki - with terrible consequences - the humanitarian dimension has been the focus of efforts to achieve a nuclear weapon-free world.

Most agreements relating to non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons have essentially been based on the principle that nuclear weapons must never again be used as the humanitarian consequences would be unacceptable.

"It is natural that Sweden focuses on people in the work to advance disarmament and non-proliferation efforts," commented Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. "Sweden will actively participate in the conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons to be hosted by Austria in December this year."

Sweden will also actively participate in consultations and discussions with other countries and organisations to examine more closely the conditions for the elimination of all nuclear weapons, a commitment that all 189 countries that are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons support.





Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Internet freedom in decline – a threat to our democracy

Published 11 June 2019

The internet must not be a place where hate campaigns and disinformation take over the flow of information. We must have clear requirements for large corporations that dominate social media globally. It is in everyone's interest that we do not leave the responsibility for our public debate and meeting places to companies, write Carin Jämtin, Margot Wallström and Peter Eriksson.

Freedom on the internet has declined for the eighth year in a row. The ability of states to shut down the internet is increasing. Journalists, independent media and human rights defenders are being subjected to physical and digital attacks. Opportunities to openly debate without risking hatred and threats, repression and persecution are being limited. The spread of disinformation is increasing and having a major impact.

On May 16-17 the Stockholm Internet Forum took place, bringing together 500 people from around 100 countries on the invitation of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to discuss the internet's role and future challenges. The focus was the shrinking democratic space online and internet access. The need for an international dialogue about the internet has never been more urgent.

## Serious trend

The fact is that we are in the midst of a negative trend with serious consequences: authoritarian states are using advanced tools to recruit new supporters, polarise opinion, undermine democratic debate, and attack and

silence opponents. Increasingly, automated information flows, increased data collection, disinformation campaigns as well as opportunities and challenges regarding artificial intelligence have gone from being peripheral issues to central issues for society.

This is happening in large parts of the world. The impact of the internet on democracy and society is being discussed across the world, from Bogota and Kigali to Hanoi. In all these places, the internet is of crucial importance to economic development and poverty reduction, and as more and more people become connected, the conditions for positive sustainable development improve. This is an aspect we cannot afford to overlook.

## Place demands on social media giants

The disinformation campaigns we see – in some cases led by governments – risk threatening our democracy. The internet cannot be a place where hate campaigns and disinformation take over the flow of information. We must have clear requirements for large corporations that dominate social media globally. It is in our common interest that we do not leave the responsibility for our public debate and meeting places to companies. This is essentially a question of democracy, of the public debate.

The negative trend, with a shrinking democratic space online, is deeply worrying and serious. This must not continue and this is exactly why we need joint action on the future of digital development. Turning this trend requires political awareness and joint, international commitments on issues such as what the internet will be like and how it will be used in the future. Human rights must not be undermined; they must be strengthened through access to the internet. The solutions can only be found in discussions between all stakeholders – states, civil society and companies, as well as everyone who is dependent on the internet in their everyday lives and their work.

## The internet can remain a positive force

The starting point for these discussions must be the incredibly important role the internet has played and continues to play in opening up closed societies, creating employment and hope for the future, enabling communication between people throughout the world and promoting knowledge flows and cooperation at a genuinely global level. Despite the problems we are seeing now, technological developments have essentially offered enormous

opportunities and changed our world for the better. We must not allow the digital threats to make us passive. We must act now to ensure that the internet remains a positive force for development and democracy, and to protect access to the internet.

Half of the world's population does not yet have access to the internet, and Sida is working to ensure that more and more people get connected. But what kind of internet they gain access to is up to us. Together with all other actors, who want to work for a free, open and secure internet, we must mobilise for joint solutions. Many of those actors met at the Stockholm Internet Forum. We are proud to live in a free country, which can offer an important meeting place to human rights activists and journalists, who are under threat, to engage in these important discussions.

**Carin Jämtin**

Director-General, Sida

**Margot Wallström**

Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Peter Eriksson**

Minister for International Development Cooperation



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# A Swedish disarmament initiative

Published 11 June 2019

Opinion piece by Margot Wallström, published in Aftonbladet on 11 June 2019.

The risk of nuclear war is greater and the threat more serious than for many years. This is why the Government is hosting a high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament today. This is the first meeting of its kind for many years, and a number of countries will be taking part at ministerial level. The fact that the meeting is being conducted at a high political level and with ministers from all over the world shows the level of interest and the need to discuss the disarmament issue in an increasingly unsafe world.

The threat of nuclear weapons is currently at its highest level since the end of the Cold War. The Government sees and is concerned by increasing tensions between countries with nuclear weapons and an increasingly aggressive rhetoric, as well as a building up of arsenals. We know that nuclear weapon use on one single occasion would have unthinkable humanitarian consequences that no country can handle.

We also see a lack of willingness to respect and maintain the disarmament agreements that for many years have underpinned international efforts for disarmament and non-proliferation. Examples of this include the increasing tensions between Russia and the United States, which have both left the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) following a Russian treaty breach. The uncertain future of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) further heightens the seriousness of the situation. If these international agreements are not upheld, the threat to Sweden's own security also increases.

One cornerstone of this work is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This is partly to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and partly to encourage nuclear-weapon states to reduce their

arsenals. A great deal hangs in the balance therefore when the NPT countries meet next year for a review of the Treaty's implementation. The Swedish Government wants to help ensure that this Review Conference achieves the results the world so badly needs, not least concerning disarmament. But the political will among the Treaty's members needs to be strengthened and preparations for this need to begin immediately.

It is against this background that the Government is making a concerted effort, and an important part of this work is today's high-level meeting. A wide range of countries have been invited to the meeting, all with different challenges and security policy conditions, but with a shared ambition to work for concrete results that bring us closer to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Today's meeting will be about measures to reduce the risk of nuclear weapon use. Our goal is for the meeting to result in a declaration that makes clear our countries' plan for the period ahead, with the objective of ensuring a successful Review Conference next year.

The Government's objective is a world free of nuclear weapons. Sceptics will always claim that the time is not ripe for fresh progress, but cynicism has never been a political force to be reckoned with. Let us therefore never forget that most things seem impossible until they have been achieved, as was also the case in 1985 when superpower rivals the United States and Russia took the first step towards a joint plan for disarmament. The joint statement that was signed by Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev contained the now familiar words: "A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought." If this kind of progress was possible during the frostiest days of the Cold War, then it is possible today too.

**Margot Wallström**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# "The EU Eastern Partnership has been a success"

Published 13 May 2019

Ten years ago, Sweden, together with Poland, initiated the EU's Eastern Partnership. As the partnership now enters its second decade, it is a good time to highlight three priorities for its future development, writes Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

The Eastern Partnership has been a success.

A claim like that is justified on its tenth anniversary because, frankly, the Eastern Partnership has transformed the six partner countries, their relation to the EU and the EU itself. It has brought more extensive change to the region than could have been foreseen ten years ago. In addition, it has created a common EU platform and policy towards its Eastern neighbourhood.

As the Eastern Partnership now enters its second decade, as one of its co-founders I want to highlight three priorities for its future:

## **1. The Eastern Partnership has always been built on shared values, and so may it continue.**

The EU is underpinned by a firm belief in the universality of our indivisible human rights –civil and political, economic, social and cultural, in democracy and the rule of law, as well as a strong commitment to the European security order and every country's right to choose its own path. These are also central to the partnership between the EU and its Eastern neighbours.

Today, some of these values are under pressure globally, and the EU is no

exception. It is more important than ever to remind ourselves why, in our history, we fought so hard to gain them.

This means that we will keep pushing for reforms to fight corruption, to increase transparency and to foster social equality. Fighting corruption is not only about preventing the misuse of resources. It is also a matter of strengthening national security.

We will provide more support to civil society actors and professional independent media, and will not remain silent when democracy is eroded. Through such measures, we build resilience in a broader sense.

## **2. People should always be at the centre of Eastern Partnership policy.**

Any political initiative that does not deliver concrete results for people's everyday lives will eventually lose its relevance. The Eastern Partnership must keep on delivering tangible change for the people of the partnership countries.

In this regard, the visa-free agreements with Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, and Erasmus+ education exchanges are more than just words. To many people, they are essential improvements and concrete symbols of the European future of their home countries.

We need stronger measures for gender equality and young people. Equality between women and men should be placed high on the agenda of all the partner countries. We must invest much more in young peoples' skills, education and vocational training, SME development and their opportunities to create a good future for themselves in their own countries. We need to further strengthen Erasmus+ and to increase links between schools in the EU and in the region.

## **3. We must accept that development will never be linear.**

The six partner countries differ in their reform ambitions and in their perspectives on the EU. It is natural that the EU approach to these countries differs, too. As long as partner countries continue to reform, the EU should continue to support and offer deeper and more extensive cooperation.

Our support to reforms should continue to be based on merit. Such merit is measured by reform progress, political will and ownership – not by words alone. Those who deliver will receive more in return from the EU. Correspondingly, we will respond with less support for less progress when

called for.

Similarly, we must develop cooperation with all six Eastern Partnership countries. More can and must be done regionally in Europe – the EU and Eastern Partnership countries together. Such issues include climate change, disinformation, migration and human trafficking.

One final remark: the Eastern Partnership has changed the perspective of the EU. We no longer talk about our Eastern neighbours as post-Soviet states, but as European partners. We no longer define our relations with these countries by the past, but by a common future. This is in itself a great achievement, and the right approach for the years to come.

**Margot Wallström**

Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs





Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# We're taking up the fight against prostitution

Published 13 March 2019

Opinion piece in Svenska Dagbladet by foreign ministers Jean-Yves Le Drian and Margot Wallström. Published on 8 March 2019.

On International Women's Day, Sweden and France are initiating a diplomatic offensive against trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation. We have agreed to develop a strategy to combat trafficking in human beings and prostitution in Europe and globally.

Sweden conducts a feminist foreign policy; France has feminist diplomacy. Together, we want to be at the vanguard of the fight against trafficking in human beings. We hope that more countries will join this important work for human rights.

The link between prostitution and trafficking in human beings is well documented and researched. One figure is enough to illustrate the situation: in the major brothels in Western and Central Europe, an estimated 95 per cent of the women come from other regions and continents – often Eastern Europe and Africa.

Testimony from brothels in Western European countries where prostitution is legal is shocking. Statistics show that the risk of developing post-traumatic stress is higher in prostitution than in war.

There are forces arguing for the legalisation of prostitution. But regardless of whether it is legal or not, prostitution always means that vulnerable people are forced to live under inhumane conditions. That's why France and Sweden have a clear position of rejecting any notion of prostitution as a form of work. We do not accept, and will fight the use of, the term 'sex work'.

France and Sweden have, together with many other countries, adopted laws that make the purchase of sex, but not the sale, illegal. This legislation has been effective in reducing the demand for prostitution and makes it easier to help victims leave prostitution. In Sweden, where the legislation has been in force for 20 years, there are comparatively few prostitutes, and the prevalence of trafficking in human beings is relatively low.

The diplomatic offensive that we are initiating today will strengthen the fight against trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation. We will encourage more countries to adopt prostitution legislation like that in France and Sweden.

This will be supported by sharing knowledge about trafficking in human beings and prostitution, stimulating debate and discussion of the role of men and gender equality, supporting women's shelters and in other ways helping victims of trafficking in human beings to a better existence, as well as by promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights in all ways, including financially.

Our fight against trafficking in human beings will be conducted together with others. We will collaborate with civil society organisations, women's shelters and other actors to make policy as effective as possible.

No one dreams of becoming a prostitute. Victims of trafficking in human beings live under conditions that are truly horrible – in Europe in the 21st century! We cannot allow this to continue.

Jean-Yves Le Drian

France's Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs

Margot Wallström

Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Religious freedom is a fundamental human right

Published 17 July 2018

Freedom of religion or belief is a universal human right. But despite this, people are persecuted, displaced and murdered because of their religion. Religious sites are destroyed and buildings set ablaze. We see this in the Middle East, where in recent years the situation of religious minorities has deteriorated.

During the Daesh advance, Christian groups in Iraq and Syria suffered unspeakable abuse, including sexual and gender-based violence, and many were killed. Other minorities were also targeted, such as the Yazidis, whose women were forced into sex slavery under Daesh. In Egypt, the Coptic Christian minority has again become the target of repeated terrorist attacks. Similar developments are taking place in Nigeria, Indonesia and Pakistan. In other places, religious freedom is severely restricted, as are other human rights. We also see ethnic and religious minorities fall victim closer to home. Synagogues and mosques are attacked and destroyed in towns and cities in Sweden, Christian refugees in Swedish refugee centres bear witness to serious threats and harassment, and terrorism in Europe is a threat to the pluralism and democracy that we have fought so hard to build.

Sweden condemns these abuses, acts of violence and killings. Everyone should be able to hold a religion without fear of threat. The Government is taking broad-based measures to prevent these threats to pluralism. I recently received the Presiding Committee of the Christian Council of Sweden to talk about global trends in freedom of religion or belief.

Promoting and protecting human rights is a cornerstone of Swedish foreign policy. Sweden is working actively – bilaterally with individual countries and in multilateral contexts – to strengthen respect for freedom of religion or belief. Engaging other governments in efforts to strengthen protection for

human rights is a permanent item on our agenda. Sweden's Ambassador for human rights, democracy and the rule of law has freedom of religion or belief among her areas of responsibility. Promoting this freedom is thus an ongoing part of her work. Sweden's Ambassador to the Holy See conducts a dialogue with the Vatican on the issue, and the Swedish Institute in Alexandria, which is part of the Swedish Foreign Service, works to promote interfaith dialogue. Our Ambassador to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation continuously raises freedom of religion, including the vulnerable situation of Christians in the Muslim world. It is important to review and report on developments, increase awareness, and hold perpetrators of abuse and of human rights violations to account.

Reinforcing civil society is an important step in strengthening human rights and the protection of religious minorities. This work also includes our extensive efforts to strengthen democracy and the rule of law around the world. As minorities are often victims of terrorism and violent extremism, greater international cooperation is needed to prevent violent extremism and strengthen counter-terrorism efforts. Sweden's participation in the Global Coalition against Daesh includes contributing military trainers to the Coalition's training mission. Sweden's international counter-terrorism priorities are aimed at long-term prevention of violent extremism in compliance with international human rights law. Security-oriented and punitive approaches alone risk being counterproductive. Excessive use of force by police and disproportionate security measures perceived as targeting particular groups fuel some of the grievances exploited by violent extremist propaganda. Strengthening democracy to counter violent extremism is a priority for the Government.

Development cooperation is an essential part of Sweden's efforts to strengthen human rights and prevent the violent extremism that often targets religious minorities. Sweden has bilateral development cooperation with Iraq, a regional strategy for the Syria crisis, and wider regional engagement in the Middle East and North Africa. Our support is based on a rights perspective, with a special focus on vulnerable groups, including ethnic and religious minorities. Contributions and projects range from strengthening democratic governance, peacebuilding and mechanisms for protecting human rights, to support to civil society, education and other basic social services.

We can naturally do more. Understanding the challenges of coexistence, the links between religion and politics in the world, and freedom of religion or belief is central; for this reason, we invest more in education. For example, the Swedish Mission Council has run a freedom of religion course at the

Ministry for Foreign Affairs. We organise and participate actively and regularly in conferences and seminars that address these issues, both at home and around the world. I have also taken steps for a conference during the next electoral period where concepts such as genocide will be discussed; the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide will be invited to take part. We are clarifying the title of our Ambassador to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and for intercultural and interfaith dialogue, who will receive a special assignment for the fight against anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and the protection of Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East and North Africa.

I am currently also setting up an internal working group at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to enhance coordination of our various actors who provide support to religious minorities in different ways.

Religion plays a major role in many conflict situations around the world. Finding ways to co-exist, even when religious beliefs differ, is therefore crucial for sustainable peace. Violence, harassment or persecution based on a person's religion must never be accepted or normalised. We will continue to fight for this during the next electoral period.

Margot Wallström  
Minister for Foreign Affairs



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# "Climate change impacts on security - now the UN must act"

Published 13 July 2018

Translation of an article published in Dagens Nyheter on 10 July 2018.

Today the members of the United Nations Security Council are meeting to discuss climate change and security for the first time in seven years. In recent years, clear signs of climate change have made it difficult to turn a blind eye.

The aim of today's meeting, chaired by Sweden, is to increase understanding about the exacerbating effects of climate change on conflict.

In Sweden this year, spring and summer have been characterised by extreme weather. Water shortages, forest fires and crop failures have become recurring news stories. The issue feels increasingly relevant and part of our reality. Extreme heat is now also affecting Canada and California, while extreme rainfall across Japan has led to two million people being evacuated from their homes, and more than 120 people have died.

But people in poor countries are those hardest hit by the adverse impacts of climate change. There, resilience to extreme weather events and crop failure is extremely low. Women are often disproportionately vulnerable in these situations. Fragile countries risk being stuck in a vicious cycle of instability and climate risks.

A few days ago, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and other United Nations and African Union representatives conducted a joint visit to Chad and Niger. In doing so, we continue the focus on a region where the link between climate change and security is particularly clear. This will help us better understand

the various dimensions of the conflict, such as links to terrorism, lack of development, gender inequality and the impact of climate change. The visit made clear that traditional security measures are not enough to promote peace and security.

Last year, the Security Council also travelled to the Lake Chad region. After the trip, Sweden initiated a ground-breaking resolution that was the first to identify the impact of climate change on a specific conflict, and called for the UN to strengthen its capacity to respond. This marked the beginning of a new approach to climate change in the Security Council.

The Sahel region of West Africa has been hit hard, especially Mali and the Lake Chad region. Shorter and less predictable rainy seasons have increased competition for scarce resources, exacerbating existing tensions between herders and settled farmers. People's livelihoods and food security are threatened, further increasing people's vulnerability. In countries where resilience to crisis is weak and social and economic security extremely limited, we see more and more people being recruited by extremist groups offering money and food. Many choose to leave their homes and flee.

Another telling example is the many small island state that are at risk of being submerged when sea levels rise. It is difficult to image the consequences of entire nations potentially disappearing.

These are only a few examples of the link between climate and conflict. We need to better understand how climate interacts with, and at times reinforces, patterns of conflict. Without this understanding, we — the international community — will never be able to take fully informed decisions to promote peace and prevent conflicts.

Sweden has worked intensively to bring greater international attention to the issue. The international community must be better at understanding, highlighting and committing to action against the threats of climate change. This means improving conflict prevention work.

The United Nations Security Council, whose primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security, must lead the way. We simply cannot ignore this issue in our quest for sustainable and peaceful development. Since Sweden took its seat on the Security Council, we have worked continuously to raise awareness of this issue. And we have achieved many important results. Sweden is working with other like-minded countries to draw attention to climate-related security risks, and we have seen results in regions including West Africa and the Sahel, and countries such as Somalia and Mali. We also work strategically with incoming Security Council members to ensure that the issue continues to receive the attention it

deserves when Sweden is no longer a member.

Sweden is doing its share, in foreign policy, climate policy and aid policy. Sweden is demonstrating global leadership in climate finance and development cooperation, and is the highest per capita donor to most of the largest multilateral climate funds. Climate and conflict perspectives are continuously integrated into development cooperation, and a range of contributions focusing on climate and security are being implemented.

The Government also supports the establishment of an international research centre for climate and security, the Stockholm Climate Security Hub, which will engage some of the leading Swedish research institutes in the field. This will be launched in conjunction with World Water Week in August with the aim of promoting knowledge development and policy dialogue in the area, not least to support the UN and other multilateral actors with evidence-based analysis.

Today's Security Council debate on climate and security was far from self-evident. But our efforts are met with ever-clearer support from countries on all continents, and with great gratitude especially from the many affected countries that are already experiencing the grave effects of climate change.

We are now looking ahead to next year's UN climate summit. If we are serious about the Global Goals, including global sustainable development and peace and security, then climate-related security risks must be on the global agenda. The situation is acute. And we have no time to lose.

**Margot Wallström**

Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Isabella Lövin**

Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate





Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Action needed to address nuclear threats

Published 05 July 2018 Updated 05 July 2018

Fifty years ago – in July 1968 – the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was opened for signature, following years of complex but ultimately successful negotiations. Shortly thereafter, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden signed the treaty. Our countries have been steadfast supporters of the NPT ever since.

Today a total of 191 states have joined the treaty and it must be considered a multilateral success story. For us, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is an obvious priority – a policy choice underpinned by both humanitarian and security concerns, as well as by global and regional considerations.

Over the years, the treaty has proven its resilience. The global stockpile of nuclear weapons has been reduced from its Cold War peak of 70 000 warheads to some 14 500 today. The proliferation of nuclear weapons has been curtailed, and the benefits of civilian nuclear energy and technology have been shared on a global scale.

However, the current global security environment is impeding efforts to pursue the vision of a world without nuclear weapons and to close remaining nuclear proliferation loopholes. The North Korean nuclear and missiles programmes are flagrant violations of a series of UN Security Council resolutions and a serious challenge to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. The outcome of the recent summit in Singapore was a step in right direction, but the real test lies in its implementation. Nuclear disarmament by the DPRK is the key factor.

The Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) is a key element of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture and is crucial for the security of the region. But it has now been brought into jeopardy. Moreover, the recent recurrent use of chemical weapons in Syria is challenging the international norms against the use of weapons of mass destruction. Failure to address the complex situation we are facing could seriously undermine the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime that the NPT embodies.

We all have a responsibility to work hard to find common ground. We must focus on what unites us, rather than on what divides us. The Nordic countries cooperate closely on disarmament and non-proliferation, despite our different forms of association with the EU and NATO. History has taught us that sustainable security can only be attained through cooperation. In our efforts to uphold and strengthen the NPT, this is a lesson well worth remembering.

On the 50th anniversary of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, our message is clear: We call for continued global commitment to the treaty and to international rules-based cooperation, and a willingness to rebuild mutual trust after years of polarisation. This requires a concerted effort and clear political engagement on the part of both nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states.

The two largest nuclear weapons states have a special responsibility. We strongly encourage the US and Russia to extend the New START treaty and to seek further reciprocal reductions in strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed warheads. We also call on the US and Russia to resolve the serious concerns about Russia's compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty through diplomatic measures. This treaty is of crucial importance for European security.

Looking towards the review of the NPT in 2020, we need to reaffirm, and make progress on, outstanding commitments made within the treaty's framework. A forward-looking agenda covering all three pillars of the treaty – disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy – is also needed.

Specific items on this agenda could include:

- Risk reduction: Measures to reduce the risk of accidental use of nuclear weapons, such as prior notification and reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons.

- Confidence-building measures: Enhanced transparency by the nuclear weapons states and strengthened negative security assurances to non-nuclear weapons states, ideally in a legally binding form.
- Practical steps: Developing credible multilateral solutions to verify future nuclear disarmament.
- Arms control: Addressing the issue of non-strategic nuclear weapons, a category of weapons currently not covered by any arms control treaty.
- Strengthening non-proliferation: Working towards universal acceptance of the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and its Additional Protocol as the global safeguards standard.
- Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT): Strengthening the global norm against nuclear testing by ensuring the entry into force of the CTBT.
- Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty: Negotiating and concluding an effectively verifiable treaty that bans the production of fissile material that could be used in nuclear weapons, and that also includes practical measures for scaling down existing stocks.
- Peaceful uses: Making the most of peaceful applications of nuclear technologies in efforts to achieve the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in areas such as health, food and water security, and environment surveillance.

For the past 50 years, the NPT has served the international community well. Yet for all its success, its future cannot be taken for granted. Above all, NPT members must uphold the common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Everything possible must be done to avert the risk of nuclear war and, in the words of the treaty itself, 'the devastation that would be visited upon all mankind'. We, the Nordic countries, are certainly willing to do our share.

Anders Samuelsen  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark

Timo Soini  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Gudlaugur Thór Thórdarson  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland

Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway

Margot Wallström  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Let us work together, with courage and patience, to make the world more gender-equal

Published 15 April 2018

Today sees the opening of the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality – a global conference with 600 participants from over 100 countries. The Forum will bring together activists, academics, politicians and entrepreneurs who put their energies into making the world more gender-equal.

If we want to achieve change, we must strive for it every day – through active and patient efforts. The women's movement showed the way, standing on the barricades and fighting for gender equality at both national and international level. Thanks to their fight, we have been able to launch, as the first government in the world, the feminist foreign policy. Sweden has received attention from all over the world, and several countries have followed suit with their own policies. Last autumn, the #MeToo movement gave international momentum to the gender equality issue.

But at the same time, we have also seen how the forces working actively against women and girls have gained in strength. This is a trend that is spreading, and all the while political leaders are reducing their global responsibility. This is dangerous and it means that those people who want a more gender-equal world need to come together even more than before. The Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality is thus taking place at a particularly important time.

Policy must lead to concrete results to be relevant. For us, therefore, it has been a priority to pursue a feminist foreign policy based on action and real

change. Let us point to a few examples:

We are investing SEK 1 billion in a global strategy for gender equality and women's and girls' rights. Activists and women's organisations working for gender equality often face strong opposition in their fight for human rights. The possibilities of working independently are reduced when financing and democratic space shrink.

We have started a network of women mediators who are active in countries such as Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine. We will continue our work to ensure women are involved in peace processes at all levels.

Thanks to the WikiGap campaign, which the Ministry for Foreign Affairs conducted together with Wikimedia on International Women's Day this year, Wikipedia now has over 2 500 more articles on women: an important contribution to the encyclopaedia, in which four in five of the articles about people are about men.

Through Sweden's engagement, the UN Security Council has considered the situation of women to a greater extent – a concrete example is that since Sweden took up a place on the Council, all of the Council's statements have mentioned women, peace and security.

Swedish support has enabled the UN body UNCTAD to produce a 'trade and gender toolbox' to help ensure that trade policy has a gender equality perspective. In addition, almost 100 Swedish embassies are now giving priority to raising and promoting gender equality issues in various ways.

The full list is much longer – and is a reason to be proud. It shows that it is possible to make a difference through determined and patient work.

Now that the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality is getting under way, we want to reach out a hand to all of the forces in Sweden and the world that are working for gender equality: let us work together, with courage and patience, to make the world more gender-equal. The Forum is a launchpad for this. We cannot afford anything less.

Margot Wallström  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin  
Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, and  
Deputy Prime Minister

Ann Linde  
Minister for EU Affairs and Trade



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# International Community Must Unite to Save the Syrian Civilians

Published 20 February 2018

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Margot Wallström

After seven years of war, the violence and intolerable suffering inflicted on the civilian population in Syria continues without respite. In fact, we are now witnessing some of the worst fighting since the conflict began. In the past few weeks alone, hundreds more people have lost their lives and tens of thousands have been driven from their homes. There are persistent reports of attacks directed at hospitals and schools, revealing complete disregard for human life and the duty to protect civilians.

Time is running out for the people of Syria. Even before the most recent escalation, the humanitarian situation in Syria was one of the worst in the world. The conflict has driven 11 million people, half of the Syrian population, from their homes, time and again. Many have found refuge in the region and beyond. Inside Syria, 13 million people are dependent on humanitarian assistance to stay alive. The worst affected are the 2.5 million people trapped in towns and cities that are cut off from the rest of the country by military sieges. As a result of this cruel tactic, humanitarian access to these communities is now almost non-existent. They cannot survive much longer. The current escalation of violence will undoubtedly push many over the edge. Children and young people make up more than half of the displaced, as well as half of those in need of humanitarian assistance.

Against this background, and in response to calls from the United Nations



and its humanitarian agencies, Sweden and Kuwait have proposed a resolution in the UN Security Council. The draft resolution calls for an immediate pause in hostilities in Syria to enable regular aid convoys with food and medicines to all those in need, increased protection of civilians and the safe medical evacuation of the critically ill and wounded. Our message is clear: the international community can no longer stand idly by as this devastating human tragedy continues to escalate.

We must now show unity and put the lives of civilians first. The human toll of this conflict to date has been devastating and the unwillingness of the UN Security Council to act is putting its credibility at stake. However, the adoption of resolution 2393 in December 2017 shows that meaningful Council action to alleviate the suffering in Syria is possible. Resolution 2393 ensured the continuation of a vital humanitarian lifeline for three million Syrians in parts of the north and south of the country. It was the only resolution on Syria adopted within the Council last year. More must be done to address the needs of civilians right across the country.

Although the tireless efforts of the humanitarian community are important, the only way to end the humanitarian crisis in Syria is through a sustainable political solution to the conflict. We know that a sustainable peace is more likely to be achieved when women are adequately represented and actively participates in the decision-making. We remain convinced that the only viable path to a just peace in Syria is through the UN-led political process. The UN Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, Staffan de Mistura, have our full support in their efforts.

In the absence of a political solution, civilians will continue to bear the brunt of the conflict. They need us to act now to save lives. We trust that all members of the Security Council will put their differences aside, engage constructively and adopt a purely humanitarian resolution that can make a real difference for people who have suffered through seven years of conflict. Surely, we can do at least this.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Margot Wallström

(Originally published in Asharq Al-Awsat Newspaper)



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# We cannot stand idly by while journalists are murdered

Published 11 January 2018

Opinion piece by Margot Wallström in Aftonbladet on 8 January 2018.

Online hate and disinformation make the need for journalists greater than ever.

More than 800 journalists have been murdered in the past decade. Nine out of ten murders remain unsolved. This data comes from UNESCO, which recently launched its report on World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development. The Government is now strengthening efforts to protect journalists' safety.

When the world becomes more and more insecure, when democracy is under pressure and human rights are questioned – it is then that we need journalists most. It is they who uphold free speech and hold those of us in power accountable. When they are threatened, we must do everything in our power to protect them.

We can never accept threats and hatred being directed at journalists for doing their job, or the fact that women journalists are often particularly subjected to threats and harassment just because they are women. We cannot stand idly by as organised online hate grows and is linked to disinformation campaigns.

Social debate is like air in the lungs of democracy. Democracy is best served when many voices and perspectives are heard.

Sweden has long had a strong voice on these issues. We have actively placed the issue of journalists' safety in focus in the UN, the EU, the OSCE and the Council of Europe. It was Sweden that initiated the pioneering resolution in

the UN Human Rights Council that confirmed that human rights, including freedom of expression, must be respected both offline and online.

Between 2014 and 2017, Sweden has quadrupled its financial support to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). During this period we have also been on UNESCO's Executive Board and have been a strong driving force for UNESCO to strengthen its work on freedom of the press and freedom of expression.

Sweden has therefore submitted several resolutions in UNESCO's Executive Board and General Conference urging all member states to strengthen their national efforts to protect journalists from violence and to counter impunity.

Last year, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs drew the attention of the world to the first free speech act in the world, the Swedish Freedom of the Press Act, which celebrated its 250th anniversary. At an international expert meeting in Stockholm, which I hosted, hate and threats against women journalists were discussed.

This year, we have also expanded our reports on human rights, in which freedom of expression and freedom of the press issues are central in all 135 countries that are analysed. All of these reports are published on the MFA website.

In the coming year, the Government's focus on freedom of expression and journalists' safety will intensify.

To follow up last year's expert seminar, I will invite national and international experts, journalists, civil society organisations and particularly engaged states for discussions.

The aim is to move from words to action and agree a number of voluntary commitments by the participating states.

The Institute for Further Education of Journalists and the Swedish Institute of International Affairs have been instructed to jointly implement a pilot study to see how a digital support centre for threatened women journalists could be arranged.

The Government also decided to support a course for journalists held by the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in Sanremo, Italy, in December. The course aims to strengthen their knowledge of the protection that international humanitarian law provides to the media.

Threats to journalists and writers are also a threat to democracy. We must never stand idly by while journalists are silenced. We must stand up against restrictions to freedom of expression regardless of where or how they are expressed.



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden has strengthened the voice of women in the United Nations Security Council

Published 04 January 2018

Opinion piece by Margot Wallström, published in Dagens Nyheter on 2 January 2018

"After a year on the UN Security Council, we can confirm that Sweden has made its mark. Although 2018 will present major challenges, the Government has its sights set on results. –We will continue our efforts to ensure a more secure world and, consequently, a more secure Sweden," writes Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

Crises and security threats abound in our world. Fulfilling its mandate to maintain international peace and security has perhaps never been more difficult for the UN Security Council.

The United Nations and the Security Council are the bedrock of our rules-based world order, which is increasingly being challenged today by authoritarian leaders and states. Defending this order is of vital interest to Sweden – it is fundamental to our sovereignty and security.

After the Second World War, the world's countries agreed on common rules governing international relations and adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The aim was to ensure that humanity would never again experience the horrors of war. Structures – such as the UN and its highest executive body, the Security Council – were necessary to ensure compliance with these rules. In this way, bloodshed on the battlefield could be replaced by patience at the negotiating table.

Maintaining this world order has been far from easy. During the UN's 70-

year existence, the world has witnessed countless conflicts and unimaginable human suffering. But a world without a rules-based system – based only on 'might is right' – would have been much less secure.

With this insight, we know that Sweden must continue to do everything it can to defend this rules-based world order. It is a prerequisite for our own security, and for peace and progress in the world.

Sweden is now halfway through its two-year term on the Security Council.

Since taking its seat in January 2017, Sweden has established itself as a credible and influential member. Achieving results requires sensitive and active diplomacy, combined with political courage. We stand up for our values, international law, human rights, gender equality and a humanitarian perspective, while also working hard to avoid political deadlocks.

Sweden has made a significant impact in five areas:

1. Sweden has strengthened the voice of women. The Security Council must move from words to action to ensure that women take part in peace processes, and to prevent women in conflict-affected countries from being subjected to violence. Studies show that peace agreements have a 35 per cent greater chance of lasting when women have a seat at the negotiating table.

Our work is producing results. Women were mentioned in every Security Council statement on emergency situations in 2017 – the corresponding figure in 2016 was 69 per cent. We have introduced stronger wording about women in resolutions, statements and peace operation mandates. We have also succeeded in getting the Security Council to take a clearer stance against sexual and gender-based violence, and sexual abuse, by personnel deployed by the UN.

2. Sweden has put the spotlight on prevention and the new challenges of our time. The Security Council needs to use broader concepts of security that include factors such as climate change and poverty. At Sweden's initiative, the Security Council agreed on a resolution on Lake Chad that, for the first time, clearly outlines the link between climate change and security. Thanks to Sweden's efforts, in August the Security Council was able for the first time to call attention to the link between famine and conflict.

The year's clearest example of conflict prevention was in January. As

President of the Security Council, Sweden played a leading role in the Council contributing to a peaceful transition in Gambia. Since armed conflict was avoided, one year on we have almost forgotten that it could easily have gone the other way.

3. Sweden has contributed to the Security Council taking action in the worst crises of our time. The situation in Yemen is one example. Sweden, following several requests for action, directed the Council's focus to the country's humanitarian situation, considered the gravest in the world today: the scene of unimaginable human suffering, with 22 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection.

Myanmar, and the horrendous persecution of the Rohingya people, is another example. In November, after Sweden's urgent efforts, the Security Council for the first time unanimously condemned the violence and human rights violations. Steps have been taken in the right direction – and now the country's leaders must take responsibility for this crisis.

Thanks to the renewal of resolution 2165, millions of people in Syria can continue to receive humanitarian assistance, such as food, fuel, blankets and protective measures. Sweden, together with Egypt and Japan, led the procedure in the Council to renew the resolution's mandate. This was the only time the Council could agree on a resolution on Syria in 2017.

4. Sweden has worked inclusively – to ensure that peace and security concern everyone. We have made certain that those affected by the Security Council have a voice in the Security Council. During Sweden's Presidency, the foreign ministers of Mali and Somalia, and representatives of the African Union, briefed the Council.

In 2017, there was a pronounced increase in the number of civil society organisations that spoke in the Security Council, which Sweden worked actively to achieve. For instance, seven representatives spoke on the theme of women, peace and security during the year – in 2016, this happened only once. We also have regular meetings with civil society in Sweden. The work of the Security Council has also become more accessible through the active use of social media.

5. We have protected Sweden's security through our work on the Security Council. An effective world order, with the Charter of the United Nations at its core, is essential to our freedom and self-determination. As a member of the Security Council, we have a unique opportunity to defend international

law and ensure any violation results in consequences. This is also how we protect our neighbourhood and the foundations of the European Union.

After a year on the Security Council, we can confirm that our work is producing results. We know, however, that many crises will continue, and that divisions in the Council will persist. We cannot ignore the fact that the right to veto was used six times in 2017. Unfortunately, unlike New Year's bells, we cannot 'ring out the old'.

This year, 2018, will present many challenges: the Korean Peninsula, the Middle East, the increasingly pronounced effects of climate change – the list could go on. But we will tackle each one. We embark on this new year with determination and with our sights set on results.

As our world becomes less secure, isolating ourselves and withdrawing from the international arena is not the way to go. The Government will continue its international efforts to achieve a more secure world – through more, not less, cooperation. This will also make Sweden more secure. We will continue our fight for sustainable peace and security in a turbulent age.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs





Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# "EU's eastern partnership needs revival"

Published 14 November 2017

Opinion piece, published in EUobserver, by Margot Wallström and Witold Waszczykowski, Sweden's and Poland's foreign affairs ministers. Stockholm and Warsaw, 14 November 2017.

Eight years ago, the EU's Eastern Partnership (EaP) was launched. It was jointly initiated by Poland and Sweden, and meant that the EU deepened its relations with six of its closest neighbours, the home of 75 million people: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

The EaP has been one of the most successful foreign policy initiatives of the EU. For instance, since 2009, the European Union provided €1.5 billion for the development of companies across the region.

Last year, more than 4,000 students from the region received scholarships in the EU, and almost 10,000 young people took part in exchange programmes. Citizens of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine now travel without a visa to Schengen countries.

A majority of people in the region (61 percent) believe that developing stronger relations with the EU is a good thing. More than 70 percent of people in the region view the EU as a bearer of core values such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law, civil liberties and economic prosperity, peace, stability and security.

## Summit in Brussels

Despite past successes, the EaP needs a revival to remain relevant in the

future.

On 24 November, European leaders will meet for the EaP summit in Brussels. We now want to propose a way ahead for the development of the EaP. It needs to be more focused on the needs of people, in particular young people, and produce more concrete results in the four following areas:

**Ownership.** We believe that all countries that are engaged in the EaP policies should be mutually responsible for carrying out its goals and priorities. Those who declare higher ambitions should also deliver on the reforms they have committed to.

Georgia is a good example.

**Resilience.** The policy dialogue between the EU and the Partner countries should focus on things that make our societies stronger. This means strengthening democratic institutions, supporting human rights and fundamental freedoms, fighting corruption, increasing transparency, making bureaucracy more efficient and increasing equality between men and women.

It also means focusing on environmental issues and meeting the challenges posed by climate change.

**Public engagement.** There is a link between building more resilient societies and the level of trust people have in institutions; one cannot be achieved without the other.

The EaP must make sense to people, and we must make sure that any reforms can be felt by ordinary people.

Young people are particularly important here, and we have asked the European Commission for a youth package to be prepared for the Summit.

**Connectivity.** We should give priority to all measures that bring people closer together. These could include visa-free travel, exchange programmes, roads, railroads, broadband internet and lower roaming tariffs.

The EU has already decided to extend its connection grids to EaP countries.

This will not only be beneficial for trade, but also for building stronger ties between people in our countries. Since infrastructure is costly, we need to combine grants and loans from European and other international financial institutions.

## Stability and resilience

While the EaP does not deal with hard security, it can be instrumental in building stability and resilience. It can also be a platform for cooperation among regional partners.

Next year, both Poland and Sweden will be represented at the UN Security Council as non-permanent members. We want to use this opportunity to promote conflict resolution and crisis management, especially in the EaP region.

Poland and Sweden remain committed to the EaP. And, as Sweden and Poland have always emphasised, the door should be kept open to potential membership for those countries that truly transform.

We take responsibility for this relationship and are convinced that building stronger relations between the EU and its Eastern Partners will lead to better lives for the people in our countries.

Margot Wallström and Witold Waszczykowski



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Wallström: A nuclear-weapon-free world is achievable

Published 29 August 2017

A treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons was adopted at the UN General Assembly in July this year. The Government will now conduct a thorough impact assessment with a view to signing the treaty, says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

Nuclear weapons are the single greatest threat to humanity and their continued existence must be seen as an international failure. Today's nuclear weapons are many times more powerful than the atomic bombs that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki 72 years ago, and could destroy cities with millions of inhabitants. Such an attack could also trigger a chain reaction that could lead to a nuclear war with immense humanitarian consequences. This is why it was important for the Government to vote in favour of the treaty negotiated at the United Nations General Assembly in July. History has shown that there is no other path to take.

With this treaty, 122 UN Member States are now prepared to support and strengthen international norms against the use and possession of nuclear weapons. This prohibition makes nuclear weapons the last weapons of mass destruction to be banned; biological and chemical weapons were banned by international conventions in 1975 and 1993 respectively.

Ever since the destructive capacity of nuclear weapons became clear, extensive diplomatic efforts have been made to have them abolished and to promote disarmament. Thanks to enormous efforts, the Cold War nuclear arsenals that reached a record-high of around 70 000 nuclear weapons have been reduced to today's approximately 15 000. South Africa, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus also completely eliminated their nuclear weapons

arsenals during that time. This is a great success, and shows that disarmament is possible. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, commonly known as the NPT and often regarded as the cornerstone of international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, has been of fundamental importance here. Two key pillars of the NPT are to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons to additional states than the five that already possessed nuclear weapons when the NPT entered into force – the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, China and France – and to ensure that these five states reduce their arsenals.

However, a historical review of the NPT should also note the failures that have led to the emergence of new nuclear-weapon states. Unfortunately, we also see that many of the original nuclear-weapon states are now modernising their arsenals in contravention of the NPT's fundamental and long-term objective of disarmament.

It is against this background that support for a total ban on nuclear weapons has grown.

In December 2016, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to launch the negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. The voting result was 123 in favour, 16 abstentions and 38 against; Sweden was among the European countries in favour, along with Austria, Cyprus, Ireland, Malta and Switzerland. This year, four weeks of intensive negotiations took place but, unfortunately, without the participation of the nuclear-weapon states.

No NATO member, with the exception of the Netherlands, participated in the negotiations, citing that nuclear weapons remain a core component of NATO's defence strategy. In the final vote, however, the Netherlands chose to vote against. Sweden regrets that not more countries relying on nuclear deterrence followed the Netherlands' example by taking part. It goes without saying that dialogue and cooperation between nuclear-weapon states, their allies and non-nuclear-weapon states are vital for long-term and sustainable results.

Sweden's vote in favour of the treaty was entirely in line with our disarmament policy as part of a broader security policy. Our policy to address the deteriorating security situation in our neighbourhood is based on a combination of military non-alignment, active foreign policy, deepened defence policy cooperation, including with NATO, and enhanced national defence capability.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has discussed the issue on a number of occasions with the international law and disarmament delegation of experts in the field. The Committee on Foreign Affairs has been informed about the ongoing efforts, and meetings have been held with civil society organisations both in Sweden and internationally.

The treaty contains a number of prohibitions against activities involving nuclear weapons. It also addresses accession to the treaty by nuclear-weapon states, the obligation to provide assistance for the victims of the use of nuclear weapons, and measures towards environmental remediation. We would have liked the treaty to be clearer in a number of areas. One of these concerns the NPT, which in Sweden's view remains the cornerstone of disarmament and non-proliferation. Furthermore, we would have liked to see much stronger verification possibilities than the text currently provides for. Sweden pushed hard for these issues during the negotiations but unfortunately without success.

It is clear that the questions concerning the interpretation of the treaty cannot be left unanswered. The period of time between when the vote took place in the UN and when the treaty opens for signature is also unusually short. The Government therefore intends to conduct a thorough impact assessment before deciding whether to sign the treaty. It is also important to emphasise that we conduct our security and foreign policy assessments as a militarily non-aligned country with its own considerations and decisions. A decision to later ratify the treaty requires the approval of the Riksdag.

Our initial assessment shows that our bilateral and multilateral defence cooperation, including our partnership with NATO and cooperation with the United States, France and the United Kingdom, can continue. The treaty also includes prohibitions against assisting in the development, testing and manufacturing of nuclear weapons. Under our interpretation of 'assist', our defence cooperation with nuclear-weapon states is not affected as it does not include nuclear weapons. During the negotiations, it became clear that the other participating countries had the same interpretation. Our engagement in the negotiations underlines the position that has been Sweden's foreign policy for decades, that our voice for disarmament can go hand in hand with responsible security cooperation.

The treaty is an important step in strengthening the norms against the use and possession of nuclear weapons, and the Government's support for the treaty continues. We will now conduct an impact assessment with a view to signing the treaty – signing without having conducted a thorough assessment

would be irresponsible. Since taking office, the Government has once again placed Sweden at the centre of global disarmament efforts. While working to enhance our own conventional military capacity and increase our international cooperation, we also understand the importance of dialogue, diplomacy and efforts to promote peace. A nuclear-weapon-free world cannot be achieved through naivety or passivity but by striking a balance between pragmatism and clear ideals. We intend to stand up for our ideals at a time when doing so is crucial, but also because we know that Sweden's security requires long-term and sound decisions.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Published in Svenska Dagbladet 25 August 2017



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Our role in the United Nations Security Council is to prevent conflicts

Published 21 April 2017

Opinion piece by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, published in Göteborgs-Posten on 14 April 2017.

We live in troubled times. The terrorist attack on Drottninggatan in Stockholm just a few days ago will leave us with a permanent scar. The fight against extremism and terrorism must remain at the top of the international community's agenda. The challenges of our times require international cooperation, and Sweden has an important role to play in this.

One example is the response to the recent chemical weapons attack on civilians in Syria. Under Swedish leadership and together with nine other countries on the Security Council, we tried to agree on a resolution on a serious investigation of this outrage so that those responsible could be held to account. It is regrettable that the permanent members of the

Security Council have been unable to agree on this. This issue must be resolved in the Security Council; we must take joint responsibility for achieving a sustainable political solution. It is high time that the Syrian people are allowed to determine their own future.

As the war in Syria rages on, the UN is warning that we may be facing the largest humanitarian famine disaster since the Second World War. Countries such as Somalia and South Sudan have been struck by a severe drought that may have catastrophic consequences.

At the end of March, we also received the terrible news that Swede Zaida Catalán and her colleagues had been killed while conducting their UN peace



and security duties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

## Strenuous and tough job

All of this has happened in the last 100 days. And all of this – and more besides – is what we have to deal with in our day-to-day work in the Security Council. It is a strenuous and tough job – but it has produced results. I would like to outline another three concrete examples.

Sweden has laid the foundations for conflict prevention to be placed at the centre of the Security Council's work, and the new UN Secretary-General António Guterres took part in the high-level meeting on this theme that was organised during Sweden's Presidency in January.

An acute crisis in Gambia was averted during our Presidency when the transfer of power from the outgoing to the incoming president was resolved through negotiations.

We have also given those affected by the Security Council a voice in the Security Council – not least women and representatives of civil society. At Sweden's initiative, women's organisations from Somalia and Nigeria and an archbishop from the DRC have been allowed to address the Security Council, for the first time ever. We have also introduced working practices that reflect the fact that the Security Council concerns everyone, and opened the work of the Security Council up to more people through active use of social media.

We also helped ensure that the Security Council agreed on a resolution that for the first time clearly outlines the link between climate change and security in the Lake Chad region of West Africa.

I like to think of these as examples of the Swedish model in action in the Security Council: clear working methods that systematically and effectively lead us towards a more secure world. We are proud to be able to contribute to agreement among the fifteen members of the Security Council – step by step, and word by word.

## Dare to ask the big questions

But we also dare to look at the big picture and ask the difficult questions. How will the UN and the Security Council tackle climate change and its consequences for international peace and security? How can we guarantee that the UN's zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse is followed? And how do we deal with the fact that the Security Council can

never be more effective than its five permanent members – each of which have a veto – allow it to be?

The answers are not clear-cut – but the questions need to be asked. This is particularly important in times like these, when the international order is often called into question. But returning to a time when cooperation is replaced by national self-interest is not an option. All of us who think the world deserves better than war, poverty and abuses must instead pick up the pace.

## Political solutions the answer

Because the answers can be found in political solutions. This is why Sweden's seat on the UN Security Council is so important. It gives us an opportunity to work for global solutions for peace, gender equality and human rights where they are needed most – but also where they are most difficult to achieve.

Sweden's voice will continue to be heard in the Security Council for several hundred days more – right up to New Year's Eve 2018. We will maintain our grand visions – but also remain a voice for progress in the small victories of cooperation.

Sweden's first 100 days on the Security Council have boosted my conviction that this is both necessary and possible.

Margot Wallström  
Minister for Foreign Affairs



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden takes its seat on the UN Security Council

Published 03 January 2017 Updated 03 January 2017

Opinion piece by Margot Wallström in Dagens Nyheter, 2 January 2016.

Sweden's non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council has begun. In January, Sweden will also hold the Security Council presidency.

This comes at a time marked by many complex conflicts. Syria continues to be a nightmare. Tensions in our neighbourhood have increased. The EU and the UN, established in the post-war period to maintain peace, are being questioned. Increasingly, voices are being raised for isolationism and nationalism.

This is why we have no time to lose if we want to make a difference and have a positive influence on developments in the world. In 1954, Dag Hammarskjöld, the then Secretary-General of the United Nations, said: "The UN was not created to take humanity to heaven, but to save it from hell." His words feel more relevant today than for a long time.

**While problems do exist in the Security Council**, we have recently seen evidence that progress is possible. On 23 December, the Security Council adopted the first resolution on the peace process in the Middle East in eight years. The resolution represents an important clarification, based on international law, of the international community's views on the settlements.

On 1 January, as Sweden assumed its place on the Security Council, António Guterres became the new Secretary-General of the United Nations. We are encouraged by his vision statement, with its focus on strengthening the UN's ability to prevent armed conflicts. We intend to build on this during Sweden's presidency in January. We want to:

1. Give António Guterres a good start. We intend to contribute to laying the foundations for an active and constructive relationship between the Security Council and the new Secretary-General. This is essential to enable the UN to take on the many peace and security challenges.
2. Highlight the UN's conflict prevention efforts and the link between women, peace and security. The UN must be much more effective at preventing the lapse and relapse into armed conflict, including women in peace processes and seeing the nexus between peace, security and development. We need early warnings of risks and impending crises. These must then be followed by early action, be it mediation or more forceful measures. Women's active participation in peace processes is a strategic issue for international peace and security. And it is both right and smart: studies show that peace agreements last longer when women are at the negotiating table. The voices of Syrian women, Somali women and other women must be heard in the Security Council.
3. Improve the Security Council's working methods. We want to contribute to a Security Council that is more effective, transparent and legitimate. Our working methods will be characterised by transparency and dialogue in a way that will help build both support and confidence. A range of peace actors, including civil society, should be involved.

Next week, on 10 January, Sweden will host a ministerial-level open debate on conflict prevention. We cannot ignore the warning signs, and then the next minute add another armed conflict – and more human suffering – to the Security Council agenda.

The debate will be the Secretary-General's first formal meeting with the Security Council. The aim is to give him and the Member States a basis for strengthening the UN's efforts to prevent the lapse and relapse into conflict.

We are well prepared. Sweden has been an observer in the Council and held consultations with all its members. At home, we have engaged in dialogues with the Riksdag and civil society, and we have established an expert reference council.

**As a member of the Security Council, Sweden will be** responsible, professional, credible, dialogue-oriented and open. Sweden's foreign policy is firmly rooted in international law, human rights, gender equality and a humanitarian perspective. Sweden will continue to combat violations of the prohibition of the use of force enshrined in the UN Charter, of human rights and of international humanitarian law. The use of the veto must be limited – especially in cases of mass atrocities such as in Syria.

As a Council member, most of our time will be dedicated to managing the situations, crises and operations that dominate the Council's work and agenda. And as the Council's agenda is driven by events – a conflict can flare up anytime – we must be prepared for the unexpected.

**The international community is increasingly confronted with new challenges**, such as pandemics, natural disasters, climate change and cyber threats. The entire UN system needs to manage these new types of threats to international peace and security in the 21st century.

UN peace operations must be more effective. At the same time, the Security Council, which formulates mandates for operations, must consider the capacity available to carry out the task. The sexual violence perpetrated by international troops against civilians in areas including the Central African Republic is completely unacceptable. Sweden will vigorously pursue demands for an effective zero tolerance policy.

**Sweden will safeguard UN cooperation with regional organisations**, not least peace and security cooperation with the EU and the African Union. As an active member of both the UN and the EU, Sweden naturally intends to contribute to strengthening cooperation between them.

There are no simple solutions to the world's many conflicts or to the tensions in the Security Council. Patient and long-term efforts are what is required. Standing up for principles and dialogue or continuing to promote gender mainstreaming can be thankless and at times difficult. Yet to build the common security and sustainable peace we believe in, it must be done.

**And we will do so from our perspective as an open country** that is dependent on the rest of the world in this age of globalisation. It is essential for us that the countries of the world solve problems together, and that bloodshed on the battlefield is replaced with patience at the negotiating table. Sweden will contribute to upholding the international order, at the heart of which lie the United Nations and the Security Council. Over the next two years we will do this as a member of the Security Council.

Sweden was convincingly elected to the United Nations Security Council – with 134 votes. The countries of the world have spoken. Now it's up to us to shoulder the responsibility that awaits.

**Margot Wallström**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs





Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Time to visit Palestine

Published 14 December 2016 Updated 14 December 2016

Svenska Dagbladet Dec 13 2016 (in Swedish) When I visit Palestine on 15–17 December, we are just weeks away from 2017. It will then have been 70 years since the UN established the vision of a two-state solution, 50 years since Palestine was occupied and 10 years since Gaza was isolated. It will also have been almost 25 years since the Oslo Accords were signed. The issues that were then to be settled within five years remain unresolved.

The situation on the ground is serious. The two-state solution is in jeopardy. Frozen negotiations, a major expansion of the illegal settlement policy and violent acts have helped to bring about a situation in which the parties are now further from each other than perhaps ever before. Many people have lost faith in a two-state solution, particularly those born after the Oslo Accords. This was clear in the consultations that Sweden, together with some ten other countries, held in the second half of this year with almost 150 Israeli and Palestinian civil society organisations within the framework of the initiative taken by France to resume the peace process.

I am visiting Palestine to be able to talk directly with the Palestinian leadership and civil society. In my talks with President Mahmoud Abbas and Foreign Minister Riad Malki, the focus will be on Sweden's and Palestine's deepened relations. Since the Government recognised the State of Palestine in 2014, our already close bilateral ties have been further strengthened, with the opening of the Palestinian Embassy in Sweden and the visit by President Abbas to Stockholm last year. We support the Palestinian leadership in its endeavour to achieve a two-state solution by peaceful means. Following our recognition, Sweden can make clearer demands of Palestine to live up to the

international commitments the country has made.

We will discuss a series of issues, such as the importance of democratic development in Palestine, respect for human rights and gender equality. I will raise the key role of civil society and the importance of fighting corruption, stemming hate propaganda and contributing to detente and combating violence. I will also stress the importance of bridging the inner-Palestinian divisions, which are a considerable obstacle to peace and development.

In addition, I will meet representatives of Palestinian civil society organisations to find out what they are doing to create confidence in the future, contribute to a dynamic Palestine and promote a two-state solution. I also want to hear how they think Sweden can contribute. I will express Sweden's solidarity with Palestine and make it clear that our long-term commitment remains firm and that Sweden wants to continue strengthening the moderate forces in Palestine. The visit to Palestine is also important for Sweden's efforts within the French initiative for the peace process in the Middle East.

I would also have liked to visit Israel, but I note that it was not possible on this occasion. I believe in political dialogue as a way of creating a deeper insight into individual approaches and views on important issues. Sweden wishes to safeguard bilateral relations with Israel and enjoys positive cooperation in many areas, such as trade, innovation and efforts to combat anti-Semitism. I hope to be able to visit Israel at a later date. Talks with both parties are necessary to find a long-term solution to the conflict.

The present situation is unsustainable. The occupation continues and violence breaks out at regular intervals. Elections have not been held for over ten years. The Palestinian economy is on life support. The Palestinians are dependent on aid for their survival and to be able to continue residing, living and developing in their country.

It is more important than ever that the rest of the world makes an active contribution to a negotiated solution to the conflict, an end to the occupation and a future in which two states live side by side in peace and security. The rest of the world also needs to continue supporting the development of both democracy and the economy in Palestine. I hope that my visit will help strengthen hope and confidence in the future, not least among the young people in Palestine.



Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden raises the ambitions in the work for human rights

Published 10 December 2016 Updated 10 December 2016

Human Rights Day is observed every year on 10 December. It presents an opportunity to highlight the Government's distinct emphasis on human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Developments over the past few decades have meant that more people than ever before enjoy their human rights, including access to education and health care, the right to work and to organise in trade unions, and to live with whomever they choose. Since the 1970s, many states have made the transition to democracy – at least as regards the introduction of multiparty systems and the conduct of regular elections. The majority of the world's states have acceded to the core human rights conventions. Sweden's foreign policy engagement has contributed to this development.

We are living in a world that is more uncertain than it has been for many years and in many places we can also see that progress is being undone.

In a growing number of countries, human rights and democracy are weakening. Authoritarian and repressive regimes are gaining more influence, both over their own citizens and in the world. A number of states, including Russia, Egypt and Turkey, have introduced legislation or taken measures that make it extremely difficult for independent actors and journalists to operate freely. A number of stable democracies have also shown disturbing populist tendencies and legislative trends that restrict freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

It is clear to us that the democratic space is shrinking.

A further factor in this downward trend is the ever-shrinking civil society

space. Human rights defenders and journalists are subjected to threats and harassment, and laws are enacted to make activities highlighting human rights violations, corruption, abuse of power or electoral fraud excessively difficult or indeed impossible. At the seminar on hate and threats against women journalists that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs co-hosted with media institute FOJO, the Swedish Institute and UNESCO, it became very apparent just how vulnerable and exposed journalists – and particularly women journalists – are as a result of exercising their profession.

Perhaps the greatest challenge when it comes to human rights is that the universality of these rights is increasingly being called into question. Cultural or historical contexts are cited that enable the meaning of rights to be interpreted differently depending on where in the world a person lives or was born. This is an unfortunate trend that Sweden will forcefully counter. This is particularly relevant with regard to women's enjoyment of their human rights. For example, about 100 states place restrictions on the types of jobs women can do.

For the Government, it goes without saying that human rights are everyone's rights and thereby universal.

Economic, social and cultural rights are given higher priority than ever before. The right to education and health, and to health care and work are just as important as the freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of assembly and other civil and political rights.

Today, access to sexual and reproductive health and rights is a globally contested issue. Forces that want to restrict these rights are gaining strength in many places. More and more, it is a matter of not regressing, for example, on the issue of sex and relationship education, which has a huge bearing on the prevention of violence against women and girls.

It is clear that gender equality issues remain controversial in many parts of the world. This is why we will continue to pursue our feminist foreign policy and focus on issues related to women's equal rights.

The negative developments we see, where human rights, democracy and the rule of law are questioned and challenged in all parts of the world, place new demands on Sweden. This requires strategic analysis and a new approach – but also integrated activity-oriented policies.

**This is why the Government is now submitting a written communication**

**to the Riksdag on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This communication will be our compass for action in the coming years, presenting the Government's priorities and tools. The communication is also unique in that it addresses the development of human rights in every region of the world.**

The Government has also appointed an Ambassador for Human Rights to have overall responsibility for the implementation of the communication and to be the messenger of Sweden's human rights, democracy and rule of law policy.

The EU project is more important than ever in a world following a repressive course. It is essential for the credibility of the EU that we practise what we preach; this is why Sweden will continue to push for human rights, democracy and the rule of law both within the EU and externally.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) also has an important role to play here with its clear emphasis on human rights, democracy and the rule of law as a prerequisite for sustainable peace and security in Europe.

The UN continues to be one of our most important platforms, and Sweden's imminent entry as a non-permanent member of the Security Council is extremely important for our work. The UN Human Rights Council and other UN bodies Sweden is involved in are important arenas. In each of these forums we intend to continue to pursue policies that are firmly anchored in human rights, democratic values and the rule of law.

Our development cooperation has a strong emphasis on democracy and gender equality, increased respect for human rights and freedom from oppression. The coming policy framework for Swedish development cooperation establishes that human rights and democracy are two of the most important priorities in this area. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency has been especially tasked with examining the issue of shrinking civil society space and proposing measures that Sweden can take to counter this. The report is to be submitted in the first half of 2017.

As a further step in putting this enhanced ambition into practice, we are conducting a freedom of opinion and expression campaign in connection with the 250th anniversary of Sweden's Freedom of the Press Act. Next year, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will present reports on human rights,

democracy and the rule of law in countries in all regions of the world.

Sweden has a proud history of working for human rights throughout the world. This is a tradition the current Government will strengthen. Our seat on the UN Security Council offers a unique opportunity to fight for these issues in a world that more than ever before needs a clear voice for the equal value and rights of all people.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# This is my goal for our time on the United Nations Security Council

Published 21 November 2016 Updated 21 November 2016

“On 1 January 2017, Sweden will assume its seat as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. This will offer Sweden a good opportunity to influence world politics and promote Sweden’s perspective on important international issues. And in yet another arena, contribute to creating conditions for a peace process in Syria,” wrote Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström in Metro on 26 October 2016.

The UN is the only global platform for international peace and security. And although the EU is Sweden's most important foreign policy arena, UN membership plays a decisive role for us.

Sweden's membership of the UN Security Council, which will begin on 1 January 2017, offers Sweden a good opportunity to influence world politics and promote Sweden's perspective on important international issues.

Being elected to the Security Council by a large majority of votes from the world's nations is recognition that Swedish foreign policy is respected and popular.

We will manage the confidence that has been placed in us in dialogue with the other members of the Security Council and with the countries that are affected by the Council's efforts, as well as with the countries contributing personnel to the UN's various international operations.

Sweden will be a professional and principled member, and will take responsibility for all the issues on the Security Council's entire agenda –

remaining prepared for the unexpected.

Sweden's actions in the Security Council will be informed by our values and principles; international law, human rights, feminist foreign policy and a humanitarian perspective will be the starting point for all our efforts.

In recent weeks, the situation in Syria has deteriorated even further. It is completely unacceptable to bomb civilian populations, attack hospitals and target humanitarian convoys. Our membership of the Security Council offers us an opportunity in yet another arena to contribute to creating the conditions for a peace process in Syria.

The Security Council must become better at both preventing conflict from breaking out and at responding earlier to signs of impending conflict. This is something Sweden will work towards, together with the UN's new Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres.

At the same time, we must be realistic. We know that the other fourteen members of the Security Council, five of whom have a veto, do not always share our views. This is a reality we will have to deal with, using the tools of diplomacy and dialogue, but never by straying from our principles.

As Minister for Foreign Affairs, I am proud of the great commitment to the UN that exists in Sweden. Sweden's work in the UN is an expression of our common pursuit of peace, solidarity and security. But also of our pursuit of justice, gender equality and sustainability.

We now need to ensure that we have an effective and popularly supported UN that is in tune with the times.

I look forward to continuing to work towards this goal.

**Margot Wallström**

Minister for Foreign Affairs



Opinion piece from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# We in Sweden are not alone in our frustration at violations in the Middle East

Published 16 October 2016 Updated 16 October 2016

Opinion piece in SvD 16 October 2016 by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs. The images of human suffering in Syria are heart-rending. Hospitals are bombed, and small children are dug out of the ruins. Humanitarian assistance is not getting through. It is unbearable to behold. The UN Secretary-General has likened Syria's largest city, Aleppo, to a slaughterhouse and the bombs continue to fall.

In recent weeks, an aid convoy was attacked in an act of barbarity targeting the most vulnerable. It is an outrage that this is being permitted to continue. But without a political solution to the conflict, we cannot begin to work for peace. Together with the other European prime ministers and foreign ministers, we need to put pressure on the Syrian regime and on Russia.

**Firstly, what is needed is an immediate ceasefire.** Since the ceasefire was broken, the bombs have continued to fall and the chasm between the parties is considerable. Last weekend, Russia once again blocked the UN Security Council from approving a resolution to bring an immediate end to the fighting. A clear signal needs to be sent to the Syrian regime and to Russia. Russia is not only responsible for its actions on the ground in Syria, it is also the country with the greatest influence over the Syrian regime.

**Secondly, the suffering of the Syrian people must be alleviated.** In their



efforts to defeat the opposition, the Syrian regime and Russia are exposing tens of thousands of civilians in Aleppo to indiscriminate violence, motivated by the fight against terrorism. As long as the bombs keep falling, people cannot access the humanitarian assistance – food, supplies and medical care – that the UN stands ready to provide. Since the crisis erupted, Sweden has been a staunch contributor to the UN-led humanitarian operations in Syria and its neighbouring countries. Over the last five years we have contributed a total of SEK 2.2 billion in addition to our substantial core support to the UN.

Last week, the EU launched an initiative for humanitarian access to Aleppo to ensure that aid convoys can reach those in need. The regime in Damascus must allow aid to reach all of the areas they have besieged and desist from removing medical equipment and medicines from the few aid convoys that are allowed in.

**Thirdly, the issue must be raised of responsibility for the violations of international humanitarian law – the laws of war – and human rights.** Both the UN's Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights have stated that it is likely that war crimes, and possibly also crimes against humanity, have been committed. Chemical weapons and other prohibited, indiscriminate weapons have been used, entire cities have been besieged and starved into surrender, a UN aid convoy has been bombed, tens of thousands of people have been arbitrarily detained, and the systematic and extensive use of torture and sexual violence has reached almost industrial proportions. Responsibility for these disgusting acts must be investigated and international justice must be done.

Next week, two important meetings will be held in Brussels: first a foreign ministers meeting, then a summit of EU leaders. It is crucial that the EU agrees on a way forward. We also made this point when the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs, Federica Mogherini, visited Stockholm last Monday. We in Sweden are not alone in our frustration at the violations currently taking place in the Middle East. But our long-term aim must be for the UN Security Council once again to be able to do its job, and our support for the UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura remains firm.

Since 1 October, Sweden has held an observer seat on the UN Security Council, and we are therefore following the discussions on Syria closely. On 1 January 2017 we will take a seat as a member of the Security Council for two years. The Security Council's scope for action on the war in Syria is

restricted by the fact that one of the combatants – Russia – is a permanent member that therefore has the right of veto. This limits what can be achieved through the Security Council. Sweden will nonetheless try to exert an influence. In the long term, it is in the interests of every member of the international community to uphold the humanitarian law standards that have formed a part of the international security order since the Second World War. Ending the war in Syria and other conflicts will thus be the most important – and the most difficult – task of our term on the Security Council.

We will therefore seek alliances with countries both in the EU and on the Security Council to find ways of bringing about meaningful peace negotiations – with both women and men at the negotiating table – and, in the longer term, the reconstruction of a ravaged Syria. We have a frighteningly long way to go. But the images that are emerging from eastern Aleppo demand immediate and unwavering efforts from us, and from the rest of the world.



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Amidst Crises, Countries Need to Invest In Sustaining Peace

Published 22 September 2016 Updated 22 September 2016

OP-ED on behalf of the Governments of Kenya, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sweden and the United Kingdom

The tragic death of Aylan Kurdi, the Syrian toddler who drowned off the Turkish coast a year ago, triggered a global outpouring of emotion and calls for a more effective and humane response to support refugees and migrants.

More recently, the picture of another Syrian boy, Omran Daqneesh, sitting dazed in the back of an ambulance after an airstrike in Aleppo, drove home the immense cost of war and spurred a renewed call to end the misery.

Responses to ease suffering, however, come after the fact, after communities have been uprooted, economic livelihoods destroyed and generations lost to violence. For moral reasons, for security reasons and for economic reasons we must become more effective in preventing violent conflicts before they start.

United Nations member states now stress the need to shift from a reactive to a preventive approach and focus on addressing root causes to prevent conflict, known as the "sustaining peace agenda."

Last year, governments committed to "leave no one behind" in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Drivers of conflict originate in the kinds of structural inequality that foster grievances and hopelessness. And once allowed to take hold, violent conflict is probably the biggest obstacle to the goals included in the 2030 Agenda to end poverty, foster prosperity, promote peaceful, just and inclusive societies and protect the planet. The sustaining peace agenda and the 2030 Agenda are mutually reinforcing and

need to be implemented in tandem.

The complexity of conflicts based in inequality and exclusion means that sustaining peace requires a long-term and comprehensive approach, involving political, security, justice, development, and human rights actions in support of national efforts, with women and youth playing a central role.

This demands constant focus and leadership by the international community. In April, member states agreed to provide that. Landmark resolutions in the General Assembly and the Security Council called on the UN system to move away from siloed approaches and act in unison to achieve sustainable peace.

We, the governments of Kenya, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sweden and the United Kingdom, hope to provide momentum to the sustaining peace agenda by co-hosting a Pledging Conference for the UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund.

The event, on September 21, seeks \$300 million for three years' worth of projects. Considering that 80% of humanitarian needs stem from violent conflicts, if we can prevent them, we would avoid tremendous suffering and save billions of dollars in intervention.

The Peacebuilding Fund is uniquely positioned to support countries emerging from violent conflict or at risk of descending into violence. The fund can take financial and political risks that others are not able to assume. As such, it often lays the groundwork for much larger funds to come in.

In Sri Lanka the PBF funded the resettlement of 7,000 people on land they had lost during years of conflict. In Mali, the Fund initiated the process on cantonment camps to house combatants to hand over their weapons, spurring the World Bank to commit \$26 million toward their reintegration into society after they demobilize. And in Somalia, the Fund is financing the establishment of local governments in places that have not enjoyed legitimate institutions in more than a generation.

Recapitalizing the Fund is a minor cost to pay for an effort that yields enormous dividends in terms of creating stable and just societies and the underpinnings of viable economies, not to mention prevent countless victims of violence. That is why we call on our fellow member states to invest in the Fund.

Beyond financial commitment, the sustaining peace agenda also calls for cooperation in knowledge sharing and peacebuilding through the exchange of expertise between countries facing similar adversities. Each actor has a role to play.

Because of the work of the Peacebuilding Fund and other peacebuilding initiatives in the past 10 years, we know better how to tackle the root causes of conflict and how to foster sustainable peace.

With the sustaining peace agenda now becoming a core goal of the UN's work, the organization is better positioned than ever to live up to the first line of its founding Charter: "We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war..."

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Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# European cooperation – and why we must defend it

Published 30 August 2016 Updated 30 August 2016

Opinion piece in Svenska Dagbladet 30 August 2016 by Margot Wallström, Marina Kaljurand, Linas Linkevičius, and Edgars Rinkēvičs.

We foreign ministers from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden are gathered here today in Stockholm to commemorate the fact that it is 25 years since we re-established our diplomatic relations after Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania regained their independence following the Soviet occupation.

During these 25 years, we have witnessed how the three Baltic States have developed into free democratic states and equal partners in the European Union. We have seen how economic, cultural and political contacts over the Baltic Sea, which were natural for centuries, could be resumed. Soviet oppression and the Iron Curtain were replaced by democracy and transparency. Courageous citizens of the Baltic States came together to defend democracy and independence. Early on, Sweden actively contributed to the changes and building of the societies that followed at political level and through the actions of organisations and individuals in a number of different areas. In 1990, then Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson hosted a Baltic Sea States Summit in Ronneby in which the Baltic States participated for the first time under their own flags. Close cooperation has flourished among our countries. The Baltic Sea no longer divides us, it unites us in our broad Nordic-Baltic cooperation, in the work on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and in our commitment to European cooperation.

These achievements must be constantly defended. Europe is facing major challenges. For the last few years, Russia has been openly challenging the European security order – through the illegal annexation of Crimea and the continuous aggression against Ukraine. Terrorist attacks that strike randomly,

war and conflicts in the EU's southern neighbourhood and continued refugee flows are severely testing EU cohesion. At the same time, the British people have chosen to leave the EU, which we respect but also deeply regret. The EU and the UK must continue to have a close relationship.

This is not the first time that Europe and the EU have had to tackle difficult challenges. Less than ten years ago we experienced a deep financial crisis from which we are slowly emerging. Through negotiations and compromises, the Union has always found opportunities and solutions to the problems it has faced. No country can address the challenges in a globalised world on its own, regardless of whether they involve guaranteeing our peace and security, fighting terrorism or managing refugee flows, or dealing with the threat against our energy security and climate. The only way to achieve results is through close cooperation.

We welcome the joint declaration by EU and NATO leaders at the NATO Summit in Warsaw, and we attach great value to the defence and security cooperation between our Nordic and Baltic countries. Sweden's policy of military non-alignment and the Baltic States' membership of NATO are key for our regional and international security cooperation.

For quite some time the Baltic States, being members of both the EU and NATO, remained 'energy islands' in the EU. In December 2015 the strategic energy infrastructure project, NordBalt, connecting the electricity networks between Sweden and the Baltic countries, was inaugurated. NordBalt is of significant importance to security policy in the Baltic region and enhances the Baltic countries' resilience and the security of electricity supply.

It is now necessary to look ahead and for the EU to tackle the challenges that face us – in particular in the areas that are important to our citizens. We should focus on discussing the issues that affect us the most. These include how we can develop democracy in Europe and how we can build a more secure European continent, not least in our part of Europe. They also include creating more jobs and sustainable growth, and continuing to develop a socially responsible and more gender-equal and fair Europe – a Social Europe.

The EU is also needed as a coherent force so as to contribute to a safer world. Not least, this involves the EU's crisis management capacity, preparedness to counter and strengthen resilience to hybrid threats, measures to prevent radicalisation, safeguarding respect for human rights and strengthening the role of women in peace and development. It is also

essential that we ensure democracy, stability and economic growth in both our southern and our eastern neighbourhoods. EU support to the countries of the Eastern Partnership is therefore vital. The dialogue that the EU is conducting with Russia must be clear and principled, and the sanctions must remain in place until Russia lives up to its side of the Minsk Agreement. Support to Ukraine must remain strong.

The EU's role is also crucial in the areas of energy, climate and environment. To tackle the cross-border challenge that these issues represent, a coherent and ambitious climate, energy, environmental and nuclear safety policy is necessary to ensure a sustainable future for coming generations. The EU's Energy Union, with initiatives in areas such as renewable energy, interconnections, energy security and efficiency, is important, as are joint measures for a non-toxic environment. We should promote internationally agreed nuclear safety standards to third countries to avoid potential transboundary nuclear threats arising in the immediate EU neighbourhood.

For these reasons, there is a need to strengthen the EU's capacity to act in the area of foreign policy. The recently presented European Global Strategy (EGS) for the EU's foreign and security policy is key in this respect.

We also cooperate in the EU to safeguard freedom of expression and freedom of the press, and our fundamental values, which are being challenged by disinformation and propaganda . This feels particularly relevant this year, since Sweden is celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Freedom of the Press Act, and it is 25 years since the Baltic States regained their freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

The progress we have seen in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania since the countries became members of the EU in May 2004 is remarkable. Foreign direct investment has multiplied, particularly from Sweden, which is the largest foreign investor in all three countries. Unemployment has decreased and the standard of living is considerably higher. Life expectancy has increased and the share of students at higher education institutions has risen significantly.

It is important to keep in mind the successes brought about by EU cooperation, not least for our four countries. We need to highlight that which is positive, which is often taken for granted. EU enlargement has proven to be one of the most important tools for peace, growth and prosperity in Europe. In this respect the EU's peacebuilding capability has proven to be one of the most successful in the world. It is therefore essential for the EU to



keep the door open for new members that meet the requirements set out by the EU.

The positive developments in our region – around the Baltic Sea – are intimately bound up with European integration. Let us – at the Nordic-Baltic level – continue to develop the EU together with our European partners for a strong, united and solidarity-based Europe.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

Marina Kaljurand, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Estonia

Linus Linkevičius, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania

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Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Europe Must Help Syria's Women Make Peace

Published 21 July 2016 Updated 30 July 2016

Opinion piece in Huffington Post 21 July 2016 by Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Hind Kabawat, High Negotiations Committee.

Violence in conflict does not discriminate. Men, women and children suffer from starvation, bombings, forced disappearances and torture. They equally experience traumatic loss when driven out of their homes. This is the case in Syria, where men and women and their families uniformly face the dire consequences of war, as evident in Darayya, Aleppo and across Syria.

Yet, it is men that clearly dominate the negotiation about Syria's future. By far, men outnumber women in the ranks of the International Syria Support Group. Men outnumber women in the Syrian negotiating parties. Any sidelining of women from the peace process will have serious consequences for Syria as well as Europe's future. To secure a lasting peace, Europe must actively work on ending the marginalisation of women and ensure that they have an active role in the peace process.

Women's involvement in a peace process is critical for any solution to last. We know this from experience. In former conflicts like El Salvador in the 1990s, Northern Ireland in 1997, and Somalia and Burundi in 2000 we saw the more women are involved in the peace process, the more likely peace will hold. Women's participation broadens the understanding of the underlying issues of the conflict and helps create more sustainable, comprehensive peace agreements that garner a wider base of support. Women are not just important partners in a peace process, they are essential for enduring peace.

Syrian women are essential for developing meaningful effective solutions.

Earlier this year in preparations for the UN-led Geneva talks, a group of Syrian women representing the mosaic of Syria's different backgrounds established the opposition's Women's Consultative Committee. Sweden, with its feminist foreign policy, was quick to offer its support to the women. With its help, this team of Syrian women was active in all the opposition's efforts during the negotiations. They offered the peace process a clear, cogent view on how Syrians are working to achieve the political solution Syrians need. These women introduced innovative, detailed plans on how existing civilian state infrastructure could be reformed and integrated into a future democratic Syria working alongside Syrian civil society. Furthermore, the Syrian women secured a commitment from the opposition that any future Syrian government would have at least 30% women representation.

Last month four headstrong Syrian women from the group - several of them members of the Syrian opposition's High Negotiations Committee - travelled to Brussels to outline their vision for Syria to European politicians and senior officials. Among them was Bassma Kodmani, Alise Mofrej and Fadwa Mahmoud. These women are diverse in background and experience, yet expressed a uniform appeal to European leaders: stop the violence, break the sieges, release detainees and ensure accountability.

Women in Syria want a political solution. But a sustainable solution cannot be reached while their sons and daughters are starving in besieged cities, agonising from torture in Assad's prisons, systematically subjected to rape or other forms of sexual violence, or dying from bombs launched at schools and hospitals. Syrian women are calling on Europe for protecting civilians because they know this is the first step to a sustainable solution.

Europe - the EU and its member states - have provided more humanitarian aid than any other donor for the Syrian people. Despite such efforts, over 1 million Syrians still live under medieval sieges. As a humanitarian leader, Europe must demand that all sieges be lifted and that access not merely be a one-off to deflect international pressure, but sustained over time.

Accountability is also critical. Sweden, one of the countries in Europe hosting the highest number of refugees from Syria, will not be a safe haven for war criminals. In the absence of international justice, Swedish courts have started prosecuting war crimes committed in Syria with more cases in the pipeline. Other European countries should follow suite. The EU should support efforts to secure the release of detainees, including by demanding that international monitors have full, unimpeded access to all detention centres, including military prisons. Doing so would not only improve the

conditions inside Assad's jails, it would also help unlock the political process in Geneva.

European policymakers have long said that Syrian women must have a voice at the peace process. Syrian women are ready to assume that role. But the valid plans women present cannot be put into action if Europe and the world fail to establish the conditions necessary to reach peace in Syria. Europe must empower Syria's women by meeting their legitimate demands to end the violence, break the sieges, release detainees, and ensure accountability. Now is the time for Europe to lead on Syria and bring about the conditions for peace.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# This is how Sweden will make a difference in the Security Council

Published 29 June 2016 Updated 29 June 2016

Opinion piece by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallström in Dagens Nyheter 28 June 2016. "Sweden has been elected. The seat on the UN Security Council is a great victory for Swedish foreign policy and Swedish diplomacy. We are convinced that as a small and open country dependent on the rest of the world, it is in our interest to contribute to and defend the international order that has at its core the United Nations and the Security Council," writes Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström (Social Democratic Party)."

Sweden has been elected to the UN Security Council. Six months ago we were considered to be out of the running. Today we have a seat on the Council. This is a great victory for Swedish foreign policy and Swedish diplomacy. For a government that stands for solidarity and cooperation, a seat on the Security Council is an acknowledgement that a global policy for sustainable peace and development pays off. For the United Nations, this means that one of its largest donors is taking its engagement and ideas, along with its demands for reform and change, into the organisation's innermost room.

During our two-year term, we will take our share of responsibility for international peace and security that membership of the Security Council entails. On 1 January 2017, when we take our seat at the table that has become a symbol of world affairs, we will do so as President, at the same time as the next Secretary-General of the United Nations takes office.

Sweden's candidacy was based on issues and a belief in dialogue and diplomacy as tools. Deeper contacts with many countries around the world have given us a better understanding of how today's challenges are perceived and experienced, but also a basis for advancing our vision of democracy and human rights, gender equality and development. This is also how Sweden will work as a member: we will listen to those concerned, defend those who need to be defended and stand up for what we believe in.

We must develop a clear and ambitious agenda in consultation with the parties in the Riksdag and Swedish organisations, with other Council members and civil society as bearers of knowledge, with the countries on the Security Council's agenda and those who contribute personnel to its peace operations:

1. Sweden intends to contribute to the main task of the Security Council: maintaining international peace and security. This means pursuing committed and informed policies on the many issues on the Council's agenda. It also means being prepared to deal with new crises and causes of conflict. The Council determines the mandate of some 25 peace operations in nearly every part of the world, adopts sanctions to prevent the supply of weapons to conflicts, and has a zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse by peacekeepers. After North Korean nuclear tests, terrorist attacks in Paris or atrocities in Syria, the world turns to the Security Council, in the same way it does when peace agreements are concluded and need to be monitored, as in Colombia. Progress is sometimes followed by deadlocks, but this must never be taken as justification for not trying. Decisions are binding for all 193 Member States. Over the next two years, it will be our role to help ensure that these will be as sound and effective as possible.
2. Conflicts must be fewer and peace more sustainable. Last year's Sustainable Development Goals and new climate agreement instilled much needed resolve in international cooperation and pointed the way to a more prosperous world. A similar breakthrough is now needed in peace and security efforts. The UN must come together to more effectively prevent relapse into conflict, include women in peace processes, and see the nexus between security, development, climate and gender equality. This is a clear agenda for Sweden, which we have long pursued and which we will bring to the Security Council. The ability to act in a timely manner must be strengthened and cooperation with the UN Peacebuilding Commission, in which we are deeply engaged, must be improved. The world cannot afford anything less than to push for peace.
3. More openness is needed – as both a goal and a means. Increased

transparency, representation and effectiveness are among Swedish UN policy objectives. This was a key message in our candidacy and will be an important dimension during our term as a member. We would like to see a reformed Security Council that limits the right of veto and that listens to, and cooperates with, others without abdicating its responsibility. Sweden itself must also work in a transparent way to help build both support and confidence. More openness is needed – because it is important in itself, because it contributes to legitimacy of the Council and, not least, because we believe it will benefit the outcome.

4. Our membership will be characterised by our values and principles. Swedish foreign policy rests on a solid foundation of international law, human rights, gender equality and a broad view of security and development. Our term on the Security Council will do the same.
5. Swedish foreign policy is conducted in various arenas: primarily in the EU, but also in the UN. Our Middle East policy promotes a peace process that will lead to a two-state solution and an end to Daesh's ruthless savagery. Our Ukraine policy remains firm in its conviction regarding implementation of the Minsk agreements, respect for the European security order and criticism of violations of international law and the United Nations Charter. Our Mali policy has put troops in the UN MINUSMA mission and police in the EU mission for training security forces. In these and other conflicts and crises, the UN and the EU work side by side. Sweden will continue to contribute to both organisations and will strengthen the cooperation between them. A strong UN benefits from a strong EU – and vice versa. The artificial 'either/or' debate must end.

In six months' time we will take our seat on the Security Council. We will be doing so at a time when, all around the world, uncertainty and insecurity are taking a toll on people's lives, and the need to work together to build sustainable peace and resilient communities has never been clearer. We will do so because we are convinced that as a small and open country dependent on the rest of the world, it is in our interest to contribute to and defend the international order that has at its core the United Nations and the Security Council. And we will do so because we believe we can make a difference – through our policies, our values and our engagement.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# A united Europe benefits both Britain and Sweden

Published 10 May 2016 Updated 10 May 2016

Opinion piece by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallström in *The Local* on May 10, 2016.

The future of the EU is uncertain. This is apparent both from the referendum in the UK and the inability of the EU countries to deal with the refugee crisis. But it would be wrong to talk about a divided Europe. Thanks to the EU, Europe is united. This has fostered peace, prosperity and solidarity between the 28 Member States. We must talk about a united Europe.

At times of crisis it is also important to remember the EU's success stories. The EU is the world's largest donor of aid, the world's largest integrated economy and accounts for nearly a third of global trade. The EU's consensus on sanctions against Russia, the EU's role in the negotiations with Iran, and the EU's commitment ahead of COP21 are good examples of successful joint action. Through cooperation at EU level, we are taking joint responsibility for climate and environment issues. No single country in Europe can meet the challenges of a globalised world alone.

Having said that, we must have a dialogue among the Member States about our common values. The refugee crisis has weakened the bonds uniting the EU. One effect of this is that it has become more difficult to assert universal values in other parts of the world. We must talk about these issues in the EU, even if we start out from different positions. It is up to us national politicians to take responsibility and to dare to stand up for the common decisions made in Brussels. We – not 'they' – are the EU.

Time and again, EU enlargement has proved the most important instrument for peace, growth and prosperity in Europe. The eastern enlargement of the EU in 2004 brought more than 500 million people into the EU's internal



market. This has tangible advantages in everyday life. It means that we citizens can live, travel, study, work, seek care and retire in any EU country we wish. The common market helps to create jobs and gives us an increased supply of goods and services at better prices. Right now, roaming charges are being phased out thanks to persevering efforts at EU level.

Free movement and common regulatory frameworks have enabled Swedish companies to grow beyond national borders. Over two thirds of Sweden's trade today is with countries in the internal market. The economic benefits of the internal market are one of several strong reasons why we hope that the people of the UK will vote to stay in the EU. It is to the UK's and the EU's advantage alike. Moreover, we want to carry on working with the UK to make the EU a stronger foreign policy actor.

One important element is to strengthen the EU's social dimension. With almost 25 million people in the EU unemployed, workers' rights are under severe pressure. Now that Europe's economies are slowly recovering from the crisis years, social cohesion and welfare must also be strengthened. We are pleased that the Commission has put this issue on the agenda and has asserted the principle of equal pay for equal work. Sweden's leading role in these issues is confirmed by the appointment of our former Minister for Finance, Allan Larsson, as President Juncker's Special Adviser for the European Pillar of Social Rights.

In a social Europe, growth and social progress are mutually reinforcing. Fair conditions and high employment rates are key to sustainable economic development in Europe. If women participated in the labour market to the same extent as men, the EU's GDP could increase by 12 per cent by 2030. The social summit planned in Sweden in 2017 will provide vital impetus in driving these issues forward.

The development of Swedish welfare is intimately bound up with European integration. On our own, Sweden cannot solve the challenges of our time. Sweden will take a central and proactive part, together with our EU partners, in tackling the challenges we face. We need a strong, unified and cohesive Union.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# “New Swedish ambassador to combat trafficking in human beings”

Published 04 May 2016 Updated 09 May 2016

Opinion article, Dagens Nyheter (DN Debatt), 4 May 2016 Sweden is intensifying its efforts to combat the exploitation of women, children and poor people in the world. As the world’s first feminist government, we are creating a new position for an ambassador to combat trafficking in human beings. The position may serve as an important instrument in international cooperation, write Minister for Gender Equality Åsa Regnér and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

Trafficking in human beings is one of the most serious forms of organised crime and a modern form of slavery. It is a violation of human rights and has a very strong gender equality and child rights perspective. This is why, as the world's first feminist government, we are now creating a new position for an ambassador to combat trafficking in human beings.

It is estimated that more than two million people are trafficked into slavery each year. Almost four fifths of the victims – mostly women and underage girls – are sold into the sex industry. Human trafficking does not affect individuals alone; it impacts the very structure of a democratic society by stripping individuals of their integrity and human dignity. It is a consequence of poverty and corruption, but also of a lack of gender equality. In many parts of the world, women and children are in an extremely vulnerable situation.

The offence of trafficking in human beings is a supply chain offence, consisting of many different stages, including the recruitment and transportation of victims, prostitution, trafficking in human organs or exploitation on the labour market. This criminal activity most often crosses national borders and involves serious violations of human rights.

The Government wants Sweden to be a strong voice in the world for gender equality and human rights. Women and men must have the same power to shape society and their own lives; children's rights must be strengthened. This means that the particular vulnerability of women and girls to human trafficking must be combated with the best possible measures. Sweden's efforts must contribute to achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda on gender equality and children's rights. The transnational nature of the crime also demands effective international cooperation and increased coordination alongside national measures.

This is why the Government is creating a new position as Sweden's ambassador to combat trafficking in human beings. It will send an important political signal to the international community that Sweden is intensifying its efforts to combat human trafficking and the exploitation of women and children and of poor and desperate people throughout the world. Ongoing wars and conflicts, and the ensuing migration, have further aggravated the situation for many women and girls at risk of being exploited and abused.

The ambassador will strengthen Sweden's international profile as a leading human rights defender. At the same time, the position may serve as an important instrument for concrete measures to improve the effectiveness of international efforts and cooperation. Through the ambassador's work, Sweden will also help to ensure that particular attention is paid to the gender equality perspective in international efforts to combat trafficking in human beings. Sweden has much to contribute, and as a nation it can serve as a good example through the Swedish Sexual Purchases Act.

The ambassador will facilitate dialogue between various governments, national agencies and international organisations on issues focusing on the prevention of and protection against trafficking in human beings, and on the prosecution of perpetrators. The position will contribute to increased knowledge and quality in the work of relevant Swedish government agencies.

Sweden's ambassador to combat trafficking in human beings will work to:

- identify and encourage the interest of other countries in cooperating to combat trafficking in human beings, possibly through concluding bilateral agreements with Sweden, focusing on combating human trafficking and other serious crime, and actively contributing to this work;
- help share Swedish experiences of discovering and prosecuting the perpetrators of human trafficking, and protecting and supporting its victims internationally;
- advance and strengthen the gender perspective in international efforts to combat trafficking in human beings by influencing other countries to adopt legislation that criminalises the demand for sexual services, similar to Swedish legislation;
- ensure that abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children come to an end;
- identify success factors and positive experiences in efforts to combat trafficking in human beings, and make them known both internationally and among relevant Swedish government agencies;
- represent Sweden at various international events focused on issues related to trafficking in human beings;
- contribute, through international advocacy work, to a more uniform interpretation of the Palermo Protocol's definition of trafficking in human beings in the countries that have acceded to the Protocol to increase, in the long run, the chances of prosecuting involved perpetrators;
- create/resume an international network of actors (international NGOs, religious leaders, companies, professional associations, media and other opinion-makers) who through their actions can contribute to both combating human trafficking and its social and economic root causes;
- generate interest in, spread knowledge about and increase expertise on trafficking in human beings among employees at Swedish missions abroad and other Swedish actors stationed abroad, as well as at Swedish companies and organisations that have representatives who work abroad;
- conduct a dialogue at home with the Swedish government agencies and NGOs that work on human trafficking issues;
- report to the Government on the progress of international efforts to combat

trafficking in human beings, and contribute to Sweden's periodic reports to international convention committees or to other international reviews of Sweden's human rights commitments;

- strengthen the image of Sweden as a driving force in efforts to combat human trafficking and its causes, through contacts with other governments and through identifying future partners; and
- consult and cooperate with specialised structures in the UN, the EU, the Council of Europe, the Council of the Baltic Sea States and other relevant intergovernmental organisations in their work to combat human trafficking, and actively push to coordinate their action.

International cooperation on these issues involves a number of actors. At global level, the UN has a coordinating role concerning the efforts of relevant UN organisations. At EU level, there is an Anti-Trafficking Coordinator. INTERPOL and Europol are also dealing with the issue.

The Government and relevant government agencies are working constantly to combat human trafficking. Sweden is associated with human rights and democracy. Human rights are women's rights. Trafficking in human beings must be stopped.

Åsa Regnér  
Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality

Margot Wallström  
Minister for Foreign Affairs



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden and Finland defend free press

Published 03 May 2016 Updated 03 May 2016

Opinion piece in the EU-observer, 3. May, 2016.

Media freedom is increasingly under threat in the EU, its neighbourhood and around the world. Recent examples include repressive legislation, violence against journalists and the spread of state-controlled propaganda and disinformation.

Not only do such measures limit the work and threaten the lives of reporters, they also curtail the participation of citizens in society, undermining the very foundation of democracy.

This year, when the Freedom of the Press Act turns 250, Sweden and Finland are working together to advance our efforts to defend freedom of expression and media freedom in Europe and beyond.

Media freedom was guaranteed in Sweden and Finland 250 years ago, when the Swedish parliament passed the world's first freedom of the press act. The process was strongly influenced by Anders Chydenius, a member of the Swedish Parliament from Karleby in present-day Finland.

The act abolished the censorship of printed publications, guaranteed public access to official documents and the right to engage in political debate. In addition to defending the freedom of expression, the act has made a fundamental contribution to the development of our modern and innovative Nordic societies.

As the act now turns 250, we regret that around the world the fundamental rights and freedoms it set out to safeguard are being increasingly threatened. In many places, democracy and the rule of law are undermined, human rights are being violated and their universal nature is denied.

At the core of these challenges lies a media landscape under attack. Repressive legislation targets journalists and human rights defenders. Ever-increasing resources are spent by some states to disseminate blatant propaganda and disinformation.

Journalists are intimidated, threatened, killed and persecuted. Perpetrators are far too seldom brought to justice. In many cases, the fear of reprisals and intimidation can lead to self-censorship by journalists and media workers.

These developments call for enhanced efforts to promote freedom of expression and media freedom, including promotion of media literacy and increased support to free and independent media around the world.

Many international organisations and NGOs have expressed their concern over the deteriorating media environment.

The OSCE representative on freedom of the media, an essential institution in this area, has on a number of occasions expressed concern regarding the state of freedom of the media in the OSCE area.

## Russian propaganda

The newly established EU Strategic Communication Team has repeatedly exposed Russian propaganda and disinformation, which is not only concerned with distorting truths and influencing public opinion.

It also seems intent on undermining the very notion of objective information, casting all information as biased or an instrument of political power. Such propaganda and disinformation risk undermining trust in media and institutions, and promoting the spread of online echo chambers, where conspiracy theories and half-truths are wielded against opponents and journalists.

This erodes public trust in institutions on which democratic societies are built. This is why we are working with our Nordic and Baltic neighbours to train journalists in investigative journalism and to support free and independent media in areas specifically affected by disinformation and propaganda.

The media landscape is changing rapidly, creating both opportunities and challenges for freedom of expression and media freedom. In many countries, the shift from traditional newspapers and TV to digital distribution channels

has already occurred.

The internet and social media empower people to exercise their freedom of opinion and expression and their right to access information. Today, we are all potential journalists, thanks to technological advances and social media. Freedom and responsibility go hand in hand when exercising the right to express an opinion.

New technology can be an enabler of democratic development. At the same time, technology can be used as a vehicle for spreading propaganda and disinformation. Critical thinking and source criticism are crucial in this context. The media play a key role in connecting the dots, so that citizens can be their own judge of what is the truth and what is not.

The Nordic countries are by no means immune to threats against freedom of expression. Hate speech and radicalisation, especially online, are an ever-growing concern in our societies as well.

## Daesh

Daesh (another name for the Islamic State jihadist group) uses images of extreme violence on social media to influence public opinion and provoke our societies in order to increase radicalisation and recruitment.

The common practice of posting photos and videos of brutal violence and executions on social media creates fear and increases polarisation within our own societies, thereby further feeding the extremists' narrative.

The 250th anniversary of the Swedish and Finnish freedom of the press act reminds us of the long road we have travelled to promote the freedom of expression.

Developments in the wider world, however, make it clear that now is no time to stop. The Swedish and Finnish governments pledge to work even harder, and jointly with media representatives and civil society, to advance freedom of expression globally.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden

Timo Soini, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland





Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

## “We must teach more countries about our Sexual Purchases Act”

Published 23 April 2016 Updated 29 April 2016

Opinion article, Expressen, 23 April 2016 France is the fourth European country to criminalise sexual purchases. We hope that more countries will take decisions in this direction, writes Sweden’s Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Gender Equality Åsa Regnér.

The French National Assembly recently voted to criminalise sexual purchases in accordance with the Swedish model. With this new law, the French government also wants to combat trafficking in human beings and trafficking networks – the modern slave trade.

France's position is a major success for all of us who are fighting for women's rights and the equal value of all people. It goes without saying that it should never be possible to buy another person or conduct trade in people's bodies. Prostitution is the exploitation of people and consolidates a sense of social superiority and inferiority that is harmful to individuals and to society as a whole. Everyone who is exploited is a victim, regardless of their gender, but we know that it is mainly women and girls who are exploited in prostitution and that it is often men who purchase sexual services.

Taking a stand for those who are exploited in prostitution and at the same time criminalising those who buy sex is the only right thing for a civilised society to do. People selling sex are often in a vulnerable situation and there must be no barriers to them seeking support to change their situation. This is why it is so important that selling sex is not a criminal act.

Sweden was the first country in the world to introduce a ban on purchasing sexual services. We are proud of this. In January 1999, it became a criminal offence to buy sexual services but not to sell them. France has become the fourth country, after Sweden, Norway and Iceland, to criminalise sexual purchases. We now hope that more countries will take decisions in this direction.

It is unworthy of a gender-equal society that men claim the right to have temporary sexual liaisons with women in exchange for payment, which is taking on increasingly organised forms in international criminal networks, where women's bodies are regarded as commodities.

When Sweden introduced the law against sexual purchases, it was thought that it could have a deterrent effect on potential sex buyers and reduce the interest from various groups or individuals abroad in establishing a more organised prostitution business in Sweden. This has proved to be true. Sweden is not as attractive a 'market'.

Support for the Sexual Purchases Act has remained constantly high in population studies going back several surveys. In the latest survey from 2014, 72 per cent took a positive view of the act (85 per cent among women and 60 per cent among men).

It is clear that the ban on purchasing sexual services has had a normative effect on potential buyers and has thus influenced the scope of prostitution in Sweden.

The Government has commissioned an inquiry into whether the ban on purchasing sexual services should also apply to Swedish citizens abroad. The inquiry has been tasked with investigating whether there is a need for measures aimed at ensuring greater protection in criminal law against trafficking in human beings, the purchase of sexual services and the purchase of sexual acts from children. The inquiry has received supplementary terms of reference to also look into the exploitation of vulnerable people for forced labour and begging, and it will present its report in June 2016.

The Government is now pushing for other countries to follow suit on the issue of criminalising sexual purchases, on the basis of both Article 6 (on prostitution and trade in women) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the EU Directive against trafficking in human beings. We are therefore pleased that France has now

taken this step. As Minister for Gender Equality and Minister for Foreign Affairs, we will prioritise this issue this year so that more girls and women can get the legislation on their side, against exploitation and oppression based on gender.

Sweden's feminist government feels a great responsibility to keep knowledge about the Swedish Sexual Purchases Act alive, both nationally and internationally.

Åsa Regnér  
Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality

Margot Wallström  
Minister for Foreign Affairs



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Two years after the illegal annexation of Crimea

Published 18 March 2016 Updated 18 March 2016

On the second anniversary of Russia's illegal annexation, European foreign ministers call for sanctions to be upheld. Opinion piece published on politico.eu March 18 2016 by Margot Wallström, Sweden; Marina Kaljurand, Estonia; Linas Linkevičius, Lithuania; Edgars Rinkēvičs, Latvia; Timo Soini, Finland; Kristian Jensen, Denmark.

Today, two years have passed since Russia illegally annexed Crimea and Sevastopol. It marked the beginning of Russia's ongoing attack on the territorial integrity of Ukraine and represents the most blatant violation in decades of the UN charter, international law and breach of the key documents that make up the European security order, such as the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris.

Since then, the human rights situation in Crimea has deteriorated dismally. Crimeans are forced to adopt Russian citizenship. Reports of torture and ill-treatment of ethnic Ukrainians and members of the Tatar community abound. The Ukrainian language is under severe pressure and media freedom is curtailed. Practically all Ukrainian TV-channels have been switched off and replaced by Russian state-controlled broadcasting. Russia's illegal detention of Crimean film maker Oleg Sentsov and social activist Oleksander Kolchenko is a flagrant example of Russia's attack on the freedom of speech in Crimea.

The most vulnerable and affected group in Crimea continues to be the Crimean Tatars, whose history is fraught with suffering and persecution. Harassed by the Russian de facto authorities, the Crimean Tatar TV station

ATR has been forced to move to Kyiv. The space for using the Crimean Tatar language is shrinking. Crimean Tatars are being targeted for prosecution and arbitrarily arrested for their alleged membership in terrorist organizations. The Russian-installed prosecutor in Crimea has recently requested to ban the activities of the Mejlis, the self-governing body of the Tatars that dates back to 1991, with the intention to label it as an extremist organization. Continuous violations of the freedom of expression and opinion as well as the freedom of belief are also frequently reported. Accounts of enforced disappearances and suspected killings committed by the de facto authorities are particularly alarming.

Crimea is not forgotten. Russia needs to be held accountable. The Crimean Tatars and other Crimeans affected by Russia's repressive policies have to be supported.

As we mark the second anniversary of the illegal annexation of Crimea, we reconfirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and its sovereignty over its entire territory. The EU's non-recognition policy of the annexation is the clearest and most effective manifestation of our support. The EU has initiated an import ban on products originating from Crimea, and banned investments as well as export of certain categories of goods and services to Crimea. EU sanctions specifically target Russian companies that operate in Crimea. And sixty persons involved in the illegal annexation of this piece of Ukrainian land are banned from travelling to the EU and have had their assets frozen in the EU.

But we should remain vigilant. Together with other countries that have followed suit, such as Norway, Iceland, the USA, Canada, Australia, etc. we must constantly, and in no uncertain terms, restate our unwavering commitment to the key principles of international law and the European security order. Letting Russia's actions pass unchecked would be a recipe for more instability and less regard for international law as future aggressors would no longer be deterred by the cost of such behavior. Therefore, the EU non-recognition policy and the sanctions must be kept under constant review, to remove loopholes and to make sure that they are effective. They will remain in place as long as Russia's illegal annexation continues.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden

Marina Kaljurand, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia

Linas Linkevičius, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania

Edgars Rinkēvičs, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Latvia

Timo Soini, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Kristian Jensen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Syria's peace talks need more women at the table

Published 08 March 2016 Updated 08 March 2016

Opinion piece by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallström in The Guardian on March 8, 2016.

The human suffering in Syria is beyond comprehension. Years of conflict have forced millions from their homes and left hundreds of thousands dead or wounded. A whole generation is growing up without security and without proper access to education and healthcare. The only long term solution to the Syrian conflict is a political one. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the peace talks resume and continue towards tangible results.

The fact of the matter is that:

- Almost half of all peace agreements fail within five years.
- Women so far have been dramatically under-represented in peace processes.
- Recent research from the Philippines and the ongoing Colombian peace talks show that inclusive peace processes, where both women and men participate, substantially increase the likelihood of peace agreements being reached and sustained.

If the parties involved in the peace talks do not include women, can they be obliged to in order to improve the chances of success? We can at least support the women who choose to assert themselves, and there is no lack of them.

The Swedish government is working on bringing Syrian women to Geneva to make sure they are heard in the peace process. I talk to these women via Skype and try to support them in every way possible. I know they will be strong voices for peace and dignity.

Half of the population of the world is female. We cannot have a situation where they are not represented at the negotiating table. It is also my firm belief that having women represented in the peace talks will result in more options to work with.

The empowerment of women and girls is a true example of smart politics. It transcends the divide between hard and soft security that enables effective and sustainable peacebuilding. Sixteen years since the adoption of UN security council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, we can firmly state that the promotion of gender equality is not only a matter of women's rights, but also, more importantly, a matter of ensuring peace and security for all.

A successful peace process is not just about reaching a ceasefire. It is also about justice, education, health, reconciliation and the fair distribution of resources. No warlord can achieve this. A sustainable peace process lays the foundation for resilient institutions that promote economic, political and social emancipation for all.

Peace processes, therefore, need to be inclusive. Women must actively participate in all decision-making processes at all levels and be active in defining priorities and resource allocation, in times of peace and in times of war.

Wherever I have travelled in the world, from Ukraine to Colombia to the Democratic Republic of Congo, I have met brave women who strive to de-escalate violence and promote initiatives for peace, often in very dangerous environments where the personal risks are extreme. The work of these women deserves our full support and long-term commitment.

As part of my government's broader feminist foreign policy, we have also initiated a Swedish network of women peace mediators and are simultaneously taking part in the development of a Nordic women's mediator network. The goal of this process is not only to strengthen our national capabilities, but also, more importantly, to cut across traditional divides and create cooperative networks with international women mediation teams from across the globe.

Mediation must be recognised as the real weapon for peace. Both the security council and the general assembly have committed to strengthening the UN's mediation capacity. Important work has been done, but we still have a long way to go.



The situation in the world calls for a feminist foreign policy that aims to strengthen women's rights, representation and access to resources. We will continue our work to involve women in peace processes to help ensure a more sustainable society.

To put it simply: more women – more peace.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden gives SEK 350 million in additional emergency aid Syria crisis

Published 04 February 2016 Updated 04 February 2016

Opinion piece by Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation. Expressen 4th of February 2016.

The war in Syria will soon enter its fifth year. There are alarming reports about how winter is hitting the refugees in Syria, who do not have enough warm clothes and shoes, and images of emaciated people bear witness to how starvation is being used as a strategy of war. More than 400 000 people are starving in besieged cities. This is completely unacceptable, and the people responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes must be held to account. Some 13.5 million people in Syria are in need of humanitarian aid or have been forced to flee from their homes. Sweden was a driving force in the adoption of the UN resolutions on increased humanitarian access, and we are now pushing for them to be respected. At the international donors conference that opens in London today, Sweden will pledge an additional SEK 350 million in emergency assistance to those affected by the war in Syria.

But humanitarian aid is not enough. Many people have given up hope of a decent future. This is equally true of those who have chosen or been forced to stay in Syria and those who have fled to neighbouring countries. They have very few possibilities to work, and far too many children are unable to attend school. This is a very troubling situation.

A political solution is necessary to bring an end to the conflict. It is therefore

encouraging that the peace negotiations in Geneva were initiated, even though they are currently suspended and it will take time to achieve a solution to the conflict. The intensified Russian bombings and the world's inability to make the Assad regime conform to the Security Council's demands for an end to sieges and bombings of civilians, full humanitarian access to the civilian population, and the release of political prisoners have played a major role in jeopardising the now suspended peace talks.

The donors conference in London is crucial in mobilising support for all the people affected by the horrors of the war and to offer hope to underpin future peace. The UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura has our wholehearted support. To increase the prospects of success in the discussions in Geneva, we are also giving substantial support to increase women's participation and influence in the negotiations.

The international community must try to inspire hope and support existing positive forces. We are therefore taking both a pledge to increase humanitarian aid and Sweden's new Syria crisis strategy, encompassing initiatives totalling SEK 1.7 billion, with us to London. Sweden is the first country to adopt a long-term strategy for the Syria crisis, and it is a model that we believe more countries should emulate. The strategy aims to mitigate the effects of the conflict in both Syria and neighbouring countries. During the conference we will push for more countries to increase aid in five areas that are central to Sweden's Syria strategy:

1. People in Syria and neighbouring countries must have increased opportunities to support themselves. Being able to support oneself inspires hope, and reduces the risks of forced marriage, forced labour and recruitment to terrorist groups, thus having an impact on all of our safety. In neighbouring countries, it can reduce tensions between refugees and local people, and offer people dignity and faith in the future. It also maintains and builds on people's skills, which is important for the future.
2. More people must have access to community services in Syria and in neighbouring countries. This means more children attending school, and access to water, sanitation and health care for more people. More than three million children are not going to school, and the number is increasing. There is an impending risk of child labour and recruitment of child soldiers. If we do not take strong action, we risk creating a lost generation, which will hamper reconstruction.
3. The courageous civil society organisations that remain in Syria, negotiating local truces, working for dialogue and documenting crimes

against human rights, need more support. Sweden is currently one of the few donors to such organisations.

4. Work to prevent violence against women and girls and ensure that victims of sexual violence receive rehabilitation and care must be given more resources.
5. Women must be able to participate in peace processes on equal terms with men. Sweden gives concrete support to women's participation in the Geneva negotiations and to women who are active in local peace efforts on the ground in Syria. More countries need to do more to ensure that half of Syria's population is not excluded from the peace process.

We hope that the London conference will result in a considerable increase in support from the rest of the world to those affected in Syria. Nonetheless, aid will not end the war. That will require a political solution, and the defeat of the terrorist organisation Daesh. But used wisely, aid can lay the foundations for a future peace. It also offers a lifeline to many people, and it can inspire faith in the future and show that the international community has not forgotten them.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström

Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Mediation: the real weapon for peace

Published 29 January 2016 Updated 29 January 2016

Opinion piece by Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Finland's Minister for Foreign Affairs Timo Soini in *Sydsvenskan* and *Huffington Post* 29th of January, among others.

We're closing the books on a year that has brought successes for diplomacy but also horrible reminders of its failures. Persistent and patient negotiations resulted in an agreement on the nuclear issue between the so called EU3+3 and Iran. The peace process in Colombia shows great promise for ending decades of conflict. Meanwhile, and despite recent diplomatic efforts, the war in Syria rages on and has left tens of thousands dead and millions displaced. The UN has launched an appeal to assist almost 90 million people across 37 countries, most of which are in conflict.

If there is one clear conclusion to draw, it is this: it is possible to prevent violent conflicts, yet most of the time we fail. We have spent hours in the past negotiating responses, but we have mostly been unable to put the same enduring effort into prevention. The consequences are disastrous. This needs to change. We must recommit to mediation.

**First, stronger UN.** Mediation is a core task of the United Nations. The UN is the most significant global mediation actor, and often the only one seen as impartial and entrusted to work in conflict situations. Both the Security Council and the General Assembly have committed to strengthen the UN's mediation capacity, but somehow this has not translated into action.

As the UN is now reviewing its peace and security agenda, it is crucial that it shows genuine leadership and sends a clear signal that persistent mediation, conflict prevention and peace building are genuine priorities. With Finland as

co-chair of the UN Group of Friends of Mediation and Sweden as the chair of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, we have solid platforms, from which we are working hard to make sure that mediation gets the recognition and resources it needs.

There is an increasing understanding among the UN member states that mediation is an efficient way to prevent conflicts. It is far less costly than trying to fix what has once been broken, it safeguards development gains and – most importantly – it saves lives.

**Second, more women – more peace.** Promoting peaceful and secure societies for all cannot be done with the participation of just a selected few. For peace agreements to be sustainable, more women must contribute to peace negotiations. Recent research highlights the positive link between women's meaningful participation in peace processes and the likelihood of peace agreements being reached and sustained.

Sweden and Finland are supporting initiatives to train women for peace processes and to strengthen gender expertise and capacity in UN mediation. In for example Iraq, where women have suffered tremendously from recent violence, Sweden has taken an active role in supporting local women peace builders and women human rights activists. Finland is supporting civil society, including women's organisations, and efforts enabling local ceasefires and peace-making in Syria. Together with other Nordic countries, we have formed a Nordic Women Mediators' Network, as one response to the need to increase women mediators in the field and to strengthen women as agents for peace. Inclusion has other dimensions as well. Civil society and local communities must be taken aboard in peace-making.

Questions relating to religion have to be included when searching for solutions through mediation. Intercultural and interfaith dialogues can be part of this process. We welcome the work of the global Network for Religious and traditional peacemakers in helping UN in its comprehensive work for peace.

**Third, states and regional organisations need to take responsibility.** A more able UN is also a UN working in tandem with regional organisations. We welcome the close cooperation with the African Union, as well as with other regional and sub-regional organisations that might be the first to sense and understand early warning signals. The European Institute of Peace, launched last year at the initiative of Sweden and Finland, aims at augmenting the global peace agenda of the EU, through mediation and

dialogue. We encourage other initiatives to strengthen our collective capacity for mediation. In a world as insecure, volatile and vulnerable as today, all hands are needed on deck.

The book on 2015 will be a rather gruesome reading. We must at least show that we've learnt the lessons it tells: to make mediation and conflict prevention a genuine priority. There are no alternatives.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice

# The battle against anti-Semitism and racism must always be fought

Published 27 January 2016 Updated 27 January 2016

SVT Opinion, 27 January 2016

Today we mark Holocaust Remembrance Day. Seventy-one years have now passed since the death and concentration camp Auschwitz was liberated and the whole world was able to see the appalling images of the victims of Nazism. The Holocaust committed against six million Jews and the genocide of half a million Roma and 2.5 million Poles and other minorities, homosexuals, sick people and political dissidents was one of the most terrible crimes of the 20th century.

The Jews and members of other minorities who fell victim to the Holocaust were murdered because they belonged to an ethnic minority group. How could anti-Semitism and racism have had such an influence in Europe, enabling the Holocaust to happen? There are of course many explanations and the answer is not a straightforward one, but the radicalisation of the 1930s and 1940s, the hate propaganda and divisions in Europe, as well as the inability of the democratic forces to take timely action against anti-Semitism and fascism most certainly played an important role.

It must never happen again. The responsibility for managing the memory of the Holocaust is therefore a matter of both honouring the memory of the millions of victims and combating anti-Semitism and racism. Knowledge is an antidote against anti-Semitism, Afrophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Ziganism and fascism. The Government is conducting a number of measures to ensure that the atrocities of Nazism and racism are not forgotten. The Living History Forum has been given a broader mandate, the National Agency for Education is carrying out initiatives to improve knowledge in schools and a national plan against racism is being implemented.



But spreading knowledge is not enough. Anti-Semitism and racism are still prevalent in Sweden and Europe. In Europe, anti-Semitism is once again claiming lives. The terrorist attack against a kosher shop in connection with the massacre at the editorial office of magazine Charlie Hebdo in January last year, the terrorist attack against the Copenhagen synagogue in February last year and the attack against the Jewish Museum in Brussels in 2014 are three examples.

This development is utterly unacceptable. One of the fundamental duties of a state under the rule of law is to protect citizens against violence and threats, especially when they are perpetrated by groups and people who do not accept the fundamental principle of the equal value of all people. In both Sweden and other EU countries, security services are now taking forceful action to combat Daesh and other terrorist groups.

In Sweden too, unacceptable attacks against Jews have occurred. The Government is aware that the total number of reported hate crimes and hate crimes with anti-Semitic motives are on the rise; for this reason, more measures need to be carried out to combat these hate crimes. The Swedish Police Authority is raising its level of ambition and greater resources are being invested in combating hate crimes. All cities and large towns now have special departments within the police force to combat this type of crime. We will see the establishment of a national consultation forum, in which representatives of vulnerable groups can have a direct dialogue with the police and other government agencies so as to improve cooperation concerning hate crimes. The Government will closely monitor the work of the police so that these measures genuinely result in more hate crimes being solved. The Swedish Commission for Government Support to Faith Communities will also distribute a minimum of SEK 10 million to faith communities for measures to enhance security.

The battle for the equal value of all people and against anti-Semitism and racism is a part of foreign policy. Sweden and the EU have a major duty to stand up for the values of the freedom and equal rights of all people upon which our societies are based when we formulate and conduct our foreign policy. Sweden is also working to strengthen a culture of dialogue and promote democratic developments so as to undermine the conditions that foster extremism. Xenophobia, hopelessness and distance from political processes do not create extremist ideologies, but they make people more susceptible to fascist, racist and anti-Semitic ideas. This work is being done not least through setting priorities for Swedish development cooperation.

Events in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s show that racism can threaten the democratic order. Anti-Semitism and racism are not just a threat against the groups targeted by such hatred; they are a threat against society as a whole. In this sense, our open and democratic society is also a victim of the threats and attacks that target individual groups, such as Jewish communities, because these attacks strike the foundation of our country: an open, democratic, free and inclusive society.

The battle against anti-Semitism must always be fought. It is a battle for the rights of individuals, but also for an open and democratic society.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Anders Ygeman, Minister for Home Affairs



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden an asset to the UN Security Council

Published 02 December 2015 Updated 02 December 2015

Opinion piece by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström in Svenska Dagbladet on 2 December 2015.

We are living in a time when we are confronted close up by global challenges. Our southern neighbourhood is marked by difficulties with regard to the refugee crisis and the underlying conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia, as well as the terrorism of ISIL/IS and other groups, and the impact of climate change. The situation in our eastern neighbourhood too, with Russia's aggression against Ukraine, is a clear example that our view on international law and security is necessary.

As a small, free and democratic country, Sweden is dependent on global cooperation to take on our common challenges. At the heart of these efforts is the UN and in particular the Security Council. For Sweden, cooperation in the EU is an indispensable platform, which can also make the UN stronger.

The Security Council is the only UN body whose decisions are legally binding for all member states. Sweden's candidacy for a seat in the Council is about our voice in multilateral cooperation, which is one of the cornerstones of our foreign policy; it is also about taking part in the discussion on conflicts that have an impact on our own society.

The Security Council's decisions make a difference. On 20 November, a unanimous Security Council passed a resolution on the fight against ISIL and terrorism. The Security Council has recently also adopted measures to increase women's participation in peace efforts and passed a resolution supporting the EU's action against human smuggling in the Mediterranean.

It does matter who has a place in the Security Council. One example of a

non-permanent member that has gained influence is Lithuania, which during this year in the Security Council has ensured that Ukraine has remained on the agenda, despite the risk of it slipping off in the light of other crises. A country such as Sweden, with our credibility in development issues, our human rights work and our ability to speak with integrity and without a hidden agenda, can make a difference.

It is precisely in situations when the Council is threatened with paralysis that it is important that the Council has non-permanent members that take action to ensure that the Council takes its responsibility. The deadlocks between the permanent members are deeply regrettable – this is why Sweden is working for a reformed and effective Security Council with a more representative circle of members and less use of the veto.

All parties in the Riksdag support the candidacy. We are presenting our candidacy as a critical friend to the UN and with an awareness of the importance of common global solutions. Sweden is the sixth largest donor to the UN system and a keen advocate of reform and greater effectiveness, and of action by the Security Council in war and conflicts. We must not abdicate influence. This is not a time to shirk responsibility.

Our candidacy is going well. The competition is tough, but we are hopeful. Besides Sweden, two other EU countries are candidates: Italy and the Netherlands. Sweden was the first of these countries on the scene, announcing our candidacy back in 2004. It has been twenty years since we last sat in the Council. We agree that it is unfortunate that EU countries are competing against each other. Sweden has sought to avoid this within the EU.

We have gained increasing support through an intensifying campaign. We see that there is respect for Sweden as a global actor and for our tradition of solidarity and dialogue, and for the fact that we stand up for principles and values. For the same reason, there are many countries that want to see us gain a seat in the Security Council.

Our candidacy efforts do not involve us compromising on fundamental principles such as human rights – as some might maintain. On the contrary, this candidacy is about gaining a platform for our values. Our candidacy efforts require that we conduct a dialogue with all of the other 192 UN member states, which is crucial, irrespective of our candidacy, for an understanding of the global problems and to be able to contribute to solutions.

Our candidacy to the Security Council is about Sweden's possibilities to influence the troubled world in which we live. A seat in the Security Council would mean an additional platform for us to pursue our policies. Sweden can take a seat at the table and put forward opinions and values that influence the world in a positive direction. This is why Sweden should have a seat in the Security Council.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Joint opinion piece by ministers of Foreign Affairs in Sweden and Lithuania

Published 17 November 2015 Updated 17 November 2015

Opinion piece by Ministers for Foreign Affairs in Sweden, Margot Wallström, and Lithuania, Linas Linkevičius, in *Ukrainskaja Pravda* 17th of November 2015

As we arrive today in Kyiv, almost two years have passed since people took to the streets in Ukraine with legitimate calls for reform and European integration. The subsequent deplorable turn of events is the tale of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and further military aggression against Ukraine.

Lithuania and Sweden have been among the most vocal supporters of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Our two countries have been at the forefront in condemning Russia's violations of international law. What Russia has done in Ukraine poses a challenge that reaches beyond Ukraine's borders and calls into question the fundamental principle that all nations are entitled to make their own foreign policy choices. Therefore, we argue that EU sanctions against Russia will have to be kept in place until the territorial integrity of Ukraine is restored, which includes Ukrainian control over its own, internationally recognised borders. For Russia to put itself back on the path toward improved relations with the rest of Europe, it needs to demonstrate, in a tangible manner, its commitment to European principles and international law.

But Russia's aggression must not cause us to overlook the bigger picture: Ukraine has launched a reform programme unequalled in scope and ambition since its independence while at the same time facing hostilities and

humanitarian suffering. Therefore, we acknowledge the courage and commitment of the Ukrainian leadership. These reforms, first and foremost, serve the benefit of the Ukrainian people – and aim to make Ukraine a successful European democracy. The European Union stands committed to Ukraine's success.

Important and bold reforms are under way in many key areas, including the energy sector, the system of local government (where decentralisation will bring political decision-making closer to the people and hopefully increase the level of trust among the general public) and the management of public finances. The EU Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area have served as a roadmap and the Eastern Partnership provides a reinforcing framework for our relations. But the implementation of these reforms needs to be accelerated as results are still not being felt by the general public. This is particularly true in the area of anticorruption and the influence of oligarchic structures.

We argue that more efforts are urgently needed in some key areas:

- The EU's long standing calls for improved rule of law and a reformed justice sector in Ukraine are part of the framework of the EU-Ukraine relations and important progress has been made by Ukraine. But according to a recent poll, only 5 per cent of Ukrainians trust the court system. This shows that more needs to be done to strengthen the independence, integrity and accountability of the judiciary, including the Prosecutor General's Office. The judiciary needs to be free from political interference and corruption. The anticorruption prosecutor needs to be truly independent and selected in a fair and transparent process. On our part we as the EU should redouble its support of rule of law in Ukraine, including by giving the EU assistance mission for civilian security sector reform, EUAM, more teeth and a broader mandate.

- Ukraine has made important steps towards reducing its energy dependency on Russia and towards a more sustainable energy consumption. But Ukraine continues to use three times more energy per person than the EU average. Greater energy efficiency would enhance both the state budget and national security. The radical reduction of gas subsidies is important, but more is needed to reduce consumption, increase energy efficiency and help consumers influence their consumption patterns. The Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P) is designed to respond to such needs, and together the EU, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and Ukraine need to do more to ensure that it delivers results.

- Ukraine has made important head way towards fulfilling the benchmarks for visa freedom. The EU Visa Liberalisation Action Plan for Ukraine contains strict conditions on anti-corruption, migration management and fundamental rights which Ukraine has to meet without exception. Defending all human rights is a vital in this regard, including through the adoption of a labour code that forbids discrimination in work places. On the EU side, we should assist Ukraine in carrying out the required reforms. We should also stand by our commitment to grant visa freedom once technical conditions are met and conditions for well managed and secure mobility are in place, as was the case for Moldova.

- Improved gender equality and strengthening of women's rights would allow Ukraine to unlock its full social and economic potential. The conflict in the Donbas region has exacerbated the problem of violence against women, and ensuring legal protection of women's rights is more important than ever. Ukraine has made important progress towards the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women (Istanbul Convention). We look forward to the early ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention by the Ukrainian parliament, which would serve as a role model for the rest of the region.

Successful reforms require patience and resolve. Ukraine and the EU have embarked on a long journey together, but we remain confident that it will lead us to the modern and rule-based Ukraine that the people taking to the streets two years ago demanded.





Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden engages for peace and stability as a friend of Israel

Published 10 November 2015 Updated 10 November 2015

Haaretz, 10 November 2015 A major challenge for peace is the absence of hope. The international community stands ready to support the parties to make courageous choices and revive a development towards a two-state solution, which entails equal rights for two peoples. Sweden has a long history of engagement for peace and reconciliation in the Middle East, and we continue these efforts as a friend of Israel, says Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

The Middle East is experiencing unprecedented turmoil, unrest and suffering. Israel finds itself in a precarious situation in a complex region, where violence as a political means is all too common. I have respect for Israeli security concerns, and believe that they are best dealt with in partnership with Israel's neighbours. The recent escalation of violence in Israel and Palestine is deeply troubling. All acts of violence and terror are deplorable and should be condemned by all. I express my deep condolences to the families of the victims. In terms of numbers of dead and wounded, this autumn has been the worst in Israel and Palestine in a long time. Excessive force must be avoided and all responses proportionate. Perpetrators must be brought to justice by due process.

In this situation, it is easy to distrust “the other side”. Fear and distrust are enemies of peace. Recent polls among Palestinians and Israelis show that they are losing hope that the vision of the two-state solution will ever become a reality. Twenty years after the tragic murder of Yitzhak Rabin and the signing of the Oslo Accords, the window of opportunity seems to be

slowly closing before our eyes. Yet we cannot give up on the long-standing vision of a safe and secure Israel living peacefully alongside an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian state.

The recent escalation of violence reminds us once again that the current situation is not sustainable. The absence of a political solution to this conflict can only lead to an endless circle of violence, deterrence and retaliation. Security is essential and nobody should have to live with a constant feeling of fear. Israel has a right and a duty to defend itself and its people from acts of terror. But security measures alone cannot make Israel truly safe. To date, repression of “the other side”, including rigorous measures of separation and the isolation of Gaza, has not proven successful in meeting the security needs of the Israeli people. I am confident that a lasting political solution would not only bring more security, but also economic prosperity to both Israelis and Palestinians, and that it is best achieved together with regional stakeholders, among others, on the basis of the Arab Peace Initiative.

Sweden has a long tradition of engagement in the Middle East Peace Process, dating back to the UN mediation of Folke Bernadotte in the 1940s. The issue of Israel and Palestine has remained a foreign policy priority for the Social Democratic party throughout the decades, with many initiatives to support on-going peace efforts. Sweden is a large contributor to humanitarian assistance in Gaza. The Swedish Government’s development cooperation with Palestine focuses on strengthening the transparency and accountability of the Palestinian Authority, increased respect for human rights including gender equality, private sector development and catastrophe resilience. The wellbeing of Israel’s Palestinian neighbour is also in Israel’s best interest.

One year ago, Sweden recognised the State of Palestine. I said then that this was a necessary step, aimed at making a positive contribution to the dormant peace process. It was intended to send a clear message of hope to younger generations that there is an alternative to violence and the so-called *status quo* in a situation where the conditions for the viability of a two-state solution were eroding. It was also intended to recognise the fact that Israelis and Palestinians have equal rights and obligations as well as equal needs for security.

Critical voices have been raised regarding the Swedish recognition of the State of Palestine, some even calling it “anti-Israeli”. But let me be clear on this. Sweden has a long history of friendship with Israel. We are and will remain a good friend. We cherish the cooperation in many areas with Israel,

one of our main trading partners in that part of the world. We have a lot in common as small innovative economies with highly educated, curious and creative populations. We want to deepen the multifaceted nature of these bilateral relations.

However, good friends are also honest in their criticism and disagreements, such as our disagreement on Gaza's isolation and the illegal Israeli settlement policy. Sweden supports the EU policy of differentiation between Israel, within the 1967 borders, and the settlements. It is with concern that we see Israel, a democracy in a turbulent region, drifting away from international law and risking the erosion of its international standing.

I believe that a better, and mutually beneficial, future can be built for both peoples, if courageous decisions are made. It is time to show leadership, responsibility and restraint, translated into concrete action. Now is the time to:

- create conditions for a results-oriented peace process, including confidence-building measures;
- reach international consensus on clear parameters and realistic time frames for negotiations, including an end to the occupation;
- move towards full implementation of agreements reached between Palestine and Israel;
- create a conducive environment for economic development in all of Palestine, including access to area C and Gaza;
- encourage progress towards intra-Palestinian reconciliation; and
- end the isolation of Gaza and ensure access and accountability for international development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

Sweden and the international community as a whole have a joint responsibility to restore and reinforce our common hope, and the hope of Palestinians and Israelis, that a just and comprehensive peace is possible. With political will and courage, it can be achieved. Sweden stands behind Israel and Palestine in these difficult times. Looking ahead, we are ready to continue to support all efforts to fulfil the vision of a two-state solution.

Margot Wallström  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden





Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden strengthens its humanitarian efforts

Published 19 August 2015 Updated 19 August 2015

Aftonbladet 19/8 Today is World Humanitarian Day. With 60 million people fleeing from war and violence, the international community is facing major challenges both in trying to resolve conflicts and in providing protection and support to people in distress.

Several of the current conflicts are a threat to international security. The refugee flows have made issues relating to solidarity a matter of urgency. Today we want to highlight the contributions Sweden is making to humanitarian efforts. The Government has decided to appoint a special envoy for humanitarian issues. This job has gone to Per Örnéus, a diplomat with considerable experience of foreign service. Per Örnéus will now, together with us, coordinate Sweden's contributions within the framework of humanitarian work.

The atrocities committed in Syria and Iraq by the terrorist organisation ISIL (or IS as it is also called) are examples of when terrorist groups act entirely arbitrarily. Civilians, including aid workers, are direct targets, and the war in Syria and Iraq is transgressing moral and geographical boundaries. We are now seeing a worrying global trend in which attacks on aid workers are increasing and it is becoming ever more difficult to reach people in distress. Limiting the effects of armed conflicts is now one of our greatest challenges.

The UN's current humanitarian system needs reforming. Sweden is the world's fifth largest bilateral humanitarian donor and we have high expectations of others to participate and contribute. It must be obligatory for countries to contribute to humanitarian work. In light of the worrying trend and the growing urgent needs, in spring 2016 the UN will host a

humanitarian summit for the international community to agree on necessary reforms.

The humanitarian system is on its knees. The UN's humanitarian appeals have grown fivefold since 2004, but last year financing levels only reached just over half of what was required. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently appointed a high-level panel to tackle the growing gap between humanitarian needs and available resources. As Minister for Foreign Affairs, I am a member of the high-level panel, and an additional six people from other countries contribute proposals and input for how the future humanitarian system is to be financed. Sweden will present concrete proposals based on our considerable experience.

We also need to better link together humanitarian measures with long-term development cooperation. The Government will shortly be adopting a new Syria crisis strategy, which will be a concrete example of how urgent humanitarian support can be linked to more long-term measures that also provide support to neighbouring countries affected by the conflict. Sweden has a role to play, both as chair of the UN Peacebuilding Commission and in my role, as Minister for International Development Cooperation, as chair of the International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding. During the autumn, the Government will also establish a Swedish civil society forum to make use of the expert knowledge available to better reach out to people in distress.

In the intermeshed world of today, war and conflicts affect us all. Sweden's long tradition of assisting people in distress is ultimately a sign of the Swedish people's international solidarity, but also a way to safeguard security for us all.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# We owe it to the victims never to forget

Published 12 July 2015 Updated 12 July 2015

Aftonbladet, 11 July 2015

In July 1995 Srebrenica was overrun by Bosnian Serb forces. Over the course of a few days, about 8 000 Bosnian Muslims were executed. Admir Buljbasic's father, Hamdija, and his brother Safet died in the genocide – the worst massacre in Europe since the Second World War. But Admir survived. Today he lives in Sweden, like 60 000 others whose country of birth is Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Many of us recently read about Admir's trip back to Srebrenica. At the Podrinje Identification Project in Tuzla, they have identified the remains of his father. The story is harrowing, and reminds us of what former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said: "The tragedy of Srebrenica will haunt our history forever."

Through Kofi Annan and in other ways, the UN has admitted that the organisation did not do enough to protect the population of Srebrenica. In 2005, as a lesson learned, the UN adopted the Principle of the Responsibility to Protect.

Another consequence is that UN peacekeeping operations have been reformed. The Security Council's mandate is clearer and civilian protection has been given greater emphasis.

I visited Bosnia and Herzegovina when I was the UN's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. I met women who were victims of systematic rape. UN Resolution 1325 and subsequent Security Council resolutions have strengthened our capacity to combat sexual violence, which is still used as a strategy of war and a weapon of terror.

Peace and reconciliation cannot be achieved if the perpetrators of these crimes go unpunished. This is why the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague is still important today.

However, in connection with the 20 year commemoration of the genocide, we are forced to note that while resolutions and new tools have been developed, the international community's efforts often end in deadlock. Our humanitarian systems are overburdened by the world's forty armed conflicts, eleven of which are large-scale wars. Refugee flows are reaching levels not seen since the Second World War.

My conclusion is that a strong European Union is a prerequisite for a more effective United Nations. But this requires the EU to increase its engagement on its own continent, where EU enlargement has proven to be one of the most important instruments of peace, stability and prosperity. Today's memorial ceremony will therefore also be an opportunity to reaffirm Sweden's strong desire to contribute to progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Western Balkans.

When Sweden joined the EU 20 years ago, the future of the Baltic and central European states in the European Union was uncertain and much debated. Today, no one questions these countries' membership of the EU. Our vision must be that EU membership for the Western Balkan countries will seem just as natural in 20 years' time.

Our political support to the Western Balkans has gone hand in hand with extensive development cooperation. After the war, support went primarily to actual reconstruction of housing and infrastructure. Today, it involves intensifying reform efforts for democracy, rule of law, human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability and economic development.

Admir Buljubasic's father, Hamdija, will be buried during today's memorial ceremony. He will be laid to rest beside his son Safet, Admir's brother.

We owe it to them never to forget. And we promise to stand firmly beside Bosnia and Herzegovina on its peaceful path to EU membership.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs





Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# A new landmark in India-Sweden relations

Published 01 June 2015 Updated 01 June 2015

The Hindu, 30 May 2015

On May 31, Sweden will have the great honour and pleasure of welcoming President Pranab Mukherjee, on the first ever state visit by an Indian President to Sweden. This historic visit offers a unique opportunity to deepen our long-standing relationship.

Swedish companies began investing in India in the early 1920s, laying the foundations for the prosperous partnership between our business communities that is still enjoyed today. Formal diplomatic relations between India and Sweden were established as early as 1948. Alva Myrdal, Sweden's first ambassador to India and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1982 for her promotion of nuclear disarmament in the United Nations, often claimed to be fired by the ideals of social justice and pacifism held by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Similarly, former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Action Plan for Ushering in a nuclear weapon-free and non-violent world order sprang from years of close collaboration with Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme. India and Sweden also share rich democratic traditions. As the largest democracy in the world, India is a source of inspiration. The principles of democracy rest on human rights — the idea that by virtue of being human, we share the same rights and freedoms. Our two countries are both engaged in actively promoting and safeguarding these principles.

Women's full enjoyment of human rights is a top priority for Sweden, domestically as well as globally. Rather than perceiving gender equality merely as a goal in itself, we regard equality to be a prerequisite for achieving our wider foreign and security policy objectives. Sweden's feminist foreign policy aims to respond to one of the greatest unresolved problems of our time, namely that the human rights of women and girls are

still being violated in so many ways around the world. Human rights are women's rights. Progress in empowering women and women's representation and rights benefits society as a whole. It is my firm belief that India and Sweden can work together as partners to find ways of addressing this critical challenge, both bilaterally and multilaterally.

## Trade and investment

Bilateral trade between India and Sweden has increased remarkably over the last few years. Today, more than 150 Swedish companies are established in India, and one new company is estimated to be registered every month. These companies provide employment — directly and indirectly for almost 7,50,000 people in India. As a nation heavily dependent on exports, Sweden regards free trade as a driver of economic growth, but not at the expense of people or the planet. For this reason, my government works actively to bring about progressive international trade agreements that dismantle trade barriers and, at the same time, we promote corporate social responsibility to protect the rights of employees and the environment.

As one of the largest and fastest growing economies in the world, India is increasingly attractive to foreign investors. Major reform programmes launched by the government of India, such as Make in India, Smart Cities and Digital India, send a clear message to the world: India is open for business and investments.

In the last few years, Sweden and India have signed a long list of agreements in areas such as science and technology, health, environment and renewable energy. I am truly impressed and encouraged by the broad range of relations between our two countries and I believe there is great scope for enhanced collaboration.

Addressing the issue of rapid urbanisation, the Indian government has set out to build 100 smart and sustainable cities. This initiative offers a great opportunity for cooperation between our two countries. Sweden is a world leader in business solutions and innovation in green technology, energy and logistics. Investments in the rapidly growing sector of sustainable urban development are critical for the global environment and the climate challenge that we face — common challenges that our countries must tackle together.

In September 2014, during his first address to the United Nations General Assembly, Prime Minister Modi spoke with conviction about an

“unwavering belief in multilateralism” deeply rooted in Indian society. Sweden shares India’s strong commitment to promote global cooperation within the framework of the United Nations.

The United Nations is the heart of global dialogue. It was founded 70 years ago on the belief that nations of the world can meet collective challenges only by working together. And in today’s increasingly uncertain world, effective multilateralism — with the UN at its core — is perhaps more important than ever. Strong support for the United Nations has always been — and will always be — key to Sweden’s foreign policy.

Our efforts to internationalise global challenges have proven influential in the past. The attendance of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972 became a milestone in global environmental cooperation. Looking ahead towards the upcoming Paris Climate Conference in December, it is significant that equitable and sustainable development, as defined in Stockholm over 40 years ago, is now at the top of the agenda. We must continue to push for a resolute international agreement addressing climate change. Our collaboration in this area is of great importance to my government. President Mukherjee’s visit to Sweden represents a new landmark in the excellent and long-standing relationship between our countries. As Indo-Swedish relations continue to evolve, our two countries should commit to joint efforts that reflect the shared values at the heart of our strong relationship.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# We are taking a stand for women's rights

Published 01 June 2015 Updated 01 June 2015

The EU's voice on women's sexual and reproductive health and rights must be strengthened. "Ahead of today's meeting in Brussels, we have worked hard for the EU to be on the front line of the fight for gender equality", write ministers Margot Wallström, Isabella Lövin and Åsa Regnér in Swedish daily newspaper SvD.

Although the fight for gender equality is gaining ground globally, in many parts of the world we are seeing a growing resistance to women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This is why Sweden is working down to the wire to ensure that the new Council conclusions on gender equality to be adopted today take a clear stance. The EU ministers gathering in Brussels this afternoon have the opportunity to put their differences behind them and stand up for the fundamental right of all individuals to have control over their own bodies – at a time when a strong EU voice is needed more than ever.

In the vicinity of the EU, violent fundamentalist groups are emerging that want to deprive women of the opportunity to participate in political life, achieve economic empowerment and gain access to health care. The desire to control women's bodies is expressed in its most extreme forms in fundamentalist groups such as ISIL, which uses sexual abuse to instil fear and gain ground. But it is not just on the battlegrounds that the fight for women's rights is being fought. Resistance to and questioning of the rights of women and LGBTQ people are also seen in international negotiation rooms

and among conservative forces making headway in Europe. A study by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation and the magazine *Expo* shows how right-wing extremist and nationalist parties that are on the rise in the EU see the rights of women and LGBTQ people as a threat to the nation state and thus to their vision of society.

We are living in a time of great change in which women's economic and political influence is being strengthened and there is a growing consensus in the international community in favour of gender equality. Current resistance can be seen as a reaction to the successes achieved and proof that the fight for women's and LGBTQ people's rights must be relentless. The most controversial issue is also the most fundamental one – the right to exercise control over one's own body, sexuality and reproduction. Women's rights activists say that they can go and vote, but they cannot decide who to marry, who to have sex with or when to have children. This oppression restricts women's and girls' lives and opportunities to fully participate in society on the same terms as men.

In Sweden, we know that measures for gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights pay off. A century ago, more women died during pregnancy and childbirth in Sweden than in Namibia today. Today, maternal mortality in Sweden is among the lowest in the world. Forty years ago, Swedish women gained the right to free, legal and safe abortions. Over the last 30 years in Sweden, no woman has died from the complications of an abortion. These are successes that have helped to build the Swedish welfare society that we all benefit from today. This year, 2015, is a year of unique opportunities to move forward on gender equality, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The ground-breaking UN Conference on Women in Beijing celebrates its 20th anniversary, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security celebrates its 15th anniversary, and the world is set to agree on new development goals to ensure sustainable development and eradicate poverty and injustice. The EU plays an important role in this work.

While there is a great deal of support for gender equality in the EU, opinions on the SRHR issue are divided. Unfortunately, a small number of countries have so far blocked a strong and united position, which has weakened the EU's voice on these issues in the world.

Ahead of today's meeting, the Government has been working hard with likeminded countries in the EU to bring about a change. During the six

months we have been in government we have managed to push through changes. At our initiative, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, recently announced that she plans to appoint a high-level representative for 1325 issues, in accordance with Sweden's proposal. This will strengthen the EU's work to combat sexual violence in conflict and to promote women's participation in peace-building efforts.

We are hopeful that our hard work will bear fruit today as well. Our feminist foreign policy is yielding results. By joining forces we will continue to push for the EU to be at the forefront of the fight for human rights, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. This requires clear leadership at all levels in the EU, strengthened accountability and greater knowledge about gender equality. Cooperation with civil society must be deepened and the action plan for the EU's international gender equality work that is currently being drawn up must cover all areas of EU external action, which is not the case today. Sweden has an important voice internationally, but if we can get the entire EU on board we will increase the impact of a feminist policy that fundamentally challenges oppression, injustice and violence.



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# We will fight in the EU for women's rights

Published 27 May 2015 Updated 27 May 2015

First published in Svenska Dagbladet 26 May 2015

Although the fight for gender equality is gaining ground globally, in many parts of the world we are seeing a growing resistance to women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This is why Sweden is working down to the wire to ensure that the new Council conclusions on gender equality to be adopted today take a clear stance. The EU ministers gathering in Brussels this afternoon have the opportunity to put their differences behind them and stand up for the fundamental right of all individuals to have control over their own bodies – at a time when a strong EU voice is needed more than ever.

In the vicinity of the EU, violent fundamentalist groups are emerging that want to deprive women of the opportunity to participate in political life, achieve economic empowerment and gain access to health care. The desire to control women's bodies is expressed in its most extreme forms in fundamentalist groups such as ISIL, which uses sexual abuse to instil fear and gain ground. But it is not just on the battlegrounds that the fight for women's rights is being fought. Resistance to and questioning of the rights of women and LGBTQ people are also seen in international negotiation rooms and among conservative forces making headway in Europe. A study by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation and the magazine *Expo* shows how right-wing extremist and nationalist parties that are on the rise in the EU see the rights of women and LGBTQ people as a threat to the nation state and thus to their vision of society.

We are living in a time of great change in which women's economic and political influence is being strengthened and there is a growing consensus in

the international community in favour of gender equality. Current resistance can be seen as a reaction to the successes achieved and proof that the fight for women's and LGBTQ people's rights must be relentless.

The most controversial issue is also the most fundamental one – the right to exercise control over one's own body, sexuality and reproduction. Women's rights activists say that they can go and vote, but they cannot decide who to marry, who to have sex with or when to have children. This oppression restricts women's and girls' lives and opportunities to fully participate in society on the same terms as men. In Sweden, we know that measures for gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights pay off. A century ago, more women died during pregnancy and childbirth in Sweden than in Namibia today. Today, maternal mortality in Sweden is among the lowest in the world. Forty years ago, Swedish women gained the right to free, legal and safe abortions. Over the last 30 years in Sweden, no woman has died from the complications of an abortion. These are successes that have helped to build the Swedish welfare society that we all benefit from today.

This year, 2015, is a year of unique opportunities to move forward on gender equality, including sexual and reproductive health and rights. The groundbreaking UN Conference on Women in Beijing celebrates its 20th anniversary, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security celebrates its 15th anniversary, and the world is set to agree on new development goals to ensure sustainable development and eradicate poverty and injustice. The EU plays an important role in this work.

While there is a great deal of support for gender equality in the EU, opinions on the SRHR issue are divided. Unfortunately, a small number of countries have so far blocked a strong and united position, which has weakened the EU's voice on these issues in the world. Ahead of today's meeting, the Government has been working hard with likeminded countries in the EU to bring about a change. During the six months we have been in government we have managed to push through changes. At our initiative, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, recently announced that she plans to appoint a high-level representative for 1325 issues, in accordance with Sweden's proposal. This will strengthen the EU's work to combat sexual violence in conflict and to promote women's participation in peace-building efforts.

We are hopeful that our hard work will bear fruit today as well. Our feminist foreign policy is yielding results. By joining forces we will continue to push



for the EU to be at the forefront of the fight for human rights, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. This requires clear leadership at all levels in the EU, strengthened accountability and greater knowledge about gender equality. Cooperation with civil society must be deepened and the action plan for the EU Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development that is currently being drawn up must cover all areas of EU external action, which is not the case today.

Sweden has an important voice internationally, but if we can get the entire EU on board we will increase the impact of a feminist policy that fundamentally challenges oppression, injustice and violence.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation

Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality



Opinion piece from Ministry of Defence, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Government proposes Swedish armed force in military training operation against ISIL

Published 09 April 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

DN Debatt 9 april 2015

The terrorist organisation ISIL, also known as IS, has spread death, destruction and fear. We have all witnessed the way in which people have been murdered or forced to flee, and communities have been wiped out, as a result of its ravages in Syria and Iraq. We have seen out-and-out atrocities towards people with differing beliefs and large-scale abuses. And we are forced to note that ISIL is also attempting to extend its terrorism to other parts of the world, including Europe.

Sweden, along with all other EU Member States, is therefore among the countries participating in the international coalition of some 60 countries that has been formed to fight ISIL in various ways, stabilise Iraq and manage the consequences of this terrorist organisation's ravages.

So far, Sweden has chosen to focus its support on a two-pronged approach: dealing with the urgent crisis, which is a matter not least of humanitarian assistance, and seeking political means to achieve a long-term solution to the underlying political problems in the region that have allowed ISIL to gain a foothold.

We have provided extensive humanitarian assistance to those who have been forced to flee from their homes in Syria and Iraq and we also support the stabilisation measures planned in areas secured from ISIL. Like others, we are also taking steps to prevent possible sympathisers from travelling to the region to take part in terrorist actions or terrorist training.

In parallel with this, we are supporting political processes aimed in the long

run at eliminating the breeding grounds of terrorist organisations such as ISIL. This support takes the form of backing UN efforts to find a solution to the violence and civil war in Syria, and promoting an inclusive and cohesive Iraq, in which strengthened democratic institutions will enable the country's many different religious and ethnic groups to influence developments. The emergence of a society under the rule of law is necessary to fight terrorism in the long term.

Iraq is in a position where military support is also needed to stop ISIL. At the request of the Iraqi Government, the international coalition is therefore providing the Iraqi defence forces, including the Kurdish Peshmerga units, with aerial support and training.

Thanks to this cooperation, it has been possible to check ISIL's offensive and areas that were formerly held by ISIL have been secured. One example is Tikrit, which was liberated from ISIL's violence last week. This proved once again that ISIL can be defeated. But that this requires joint efforts.

Since the winter, the Government has been investigating the possibility of Sweden participating in these joint military operations. Today, the Government is presenting a proposal for Sweden to participate in the military training operation in northern Iraq.

The Government proposes that the Riksdag allow a Swedish armed force consisting of 35 persons to be made available in 2015 to participate in the military training operation being carried out by the international coalition against ISIL in northern Iraq. The Swedish Armed Forces will put together an all-round, fit-for-purpose force to manage the tasks included in the operation. Should the security situation deteriorate, the Swedish Armed Forces will be able to make temporary reinforcements to a level of 120 persons for evacuation and reinforcement operations. The Government's decision is based on Iraq's request for assistance to stop ISIL, which also provides the basis for the operation in international law.

The main tasks of the planned Swedish contribution will be training and advice to the Iraqi security forces in northern parts of Iraq.

The Swedish force will be under Swedish national command and control during the operation. Necessary coordination will take place within the international coalition against ISIL, primarily with other actors in the area of operations, including the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Finland.

The Swedish operation in northern Iraq is part of a larger picture. The international coalition is actively working against ISIL in several parts of Iraq, and the operation in northern Iraq is one part of this. Moreover, Sweden has long had a broad, long-term commitment to and involvement with Iraq. Our relations are very good and encompass cooperation in a range of areas based on large-scale international exchanges, mainly thanks to the substantial proportion of the Swedish population – close to two per cent – with roots in Iraq and the region. In addition, Sweden has engaged in close development cooperation with Iraq since 2004, focusing on democratic development, human rights, the situation of women and gender equality, anti-corruption and support to civil society.

ISIL's ravages are terrible. The violence and hatred appear limitless. Their objective is to inspire fear so that resistance gives way and violence can triumph. This must not be allowed to happen. That is why the efforts of the international coalition against ISIL are crucial. Cooperation against terrorism is the key to success. We, on Sweden's part, will continue to contribute to these common efforts.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Peter Hultqvist, Minister for Defence



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Swedish - South Africa links go back a long way

Published 08 April 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Pretoria News 8 april 2015 In connection to Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallström's visit to South Africa (for the Nordic Africa Meeting of Foreign Ministers) she wrote an article describing the long term commitment and relationship between our two countries. The article also highlights some of the key issues that she will highlight during the meeting.

One of the proudest moments in modern Swedish history was when Nelson Mandela visited Sweden in 1990 – the first country outside of Africa – after his long imprisonment.

Sweden's relations with South Africa are unique. As far back as the 1960s, a country-wide Swedish anti-apartheid movement arose. In the early 1970s, we were the only western country to give official political support to the anti-apartheid movement, as well as massive financial support.

The victory for democracy in South Africa and the election of Nelson Mandela as President was an extraordinarily positive event for us Swedes as well. Since then, the relationship between our countries has evolved and we cooperate on a range of issues, not least trade and investments.

For these reasons, I am very happy to be here in South Africa today – the first minister from the new Social Democrat-led Swedish Government – for bilateral meetings and to participate in the Nordic-African Foreign Ministers Meeting. I am looking forward to discussions on issues of mutual concern. Below are four of the issues I will highlight:

## Peace and security

Standing up to security threats is a joint responsibility and one in which the value of solidarity comes through. I commend South African efforts to help address conflicts on the continent. South Africa's contribution to the UN force in the DRC is a case in point.

Threats like this must always be met with determination. Sweden remains committed to supporting African efforts at regional peacekeeping. Furthermore, to promote long-term stability and sustainable development in Africa, Sweden remains engaged in substantial development cooperation in the region, while simultaneously making great efforts to increase trade.

In Sweden's neighbourhood, too, new threats have emerged. In Ukraine, we have seen Russia illegally annex the Crimean Peninsula. We have seen the terrible situation created by the escalation on the ground in eastern Ukraine, with no doubt that Russian-backed separatists are responsible. Since spring last year, more than 6 000 Ukrainians have been killed and one million people have been internally displaced. Once again, we must remind ourselves of the necessity of international security based on principles such as non-aggression, respect for international law and human rights, and the right to territorial integrity.

## Jobs and growth

Swedish-South African cooperation in trade and investments – for example in ICT and energy and mining equipment – is an important vehicle for future success for both of our countries. Jobs are in equal shares the foundation of human dignity and of economic growth. Some 18 000 South Africans are currently employed by Swedish companies.

This is a good foundation for developing trade and economic exchange between our countries, leading to sustainable job creation. For youth, especially, employment is crucial for empowerment and the ability to build a home and family. This is one of the most important challenges we have as politicians. Working together, we enhance the chances for dynamic development in which people from all backgrounds are given a chance to contribute to development, both with regard to their own lives and to society.

## Peace in Israel and Palestine

One of the new Swedish Government's first decisions was to recognise Palestine as a sovereign state. The main reason was that the criteria of recognition were fulfilled. Through our decision, Sweden wants to give new dynamics to a halted peace process, facilitate a peace deal by making the parties less unequal and instil hope in young Palestinians and Israelis that peaceful co-existence is possible.

The goal is to make it possible for Israel and Palestine to live within reciprocally acknowledged borders, with the 1967 borders as the point of departure and where potential land swaps would require the agreement of both parties.

## Human rights and gender equality

The principles of democracy rest on human rights; that all human beings have the same rights and freedoms. Democracy is never finalised and finished, but must constantly be developed and deepened in interaction between those of us elected by the people and the people who elected us. Permanent dialogue and contact with civil society organisations is a crucial tool. This is a task for all government representatives around the world; a task we must constantly remind ourselves of and work towards.

Human rights are also women's rights. Striving towards gender equality is not only a goal in itself, but also a precondition for achieving our wider foreign and security policy objectives. In this context, I warmly support the prominent role South Africa has played in promoting the role of women within the framework of the African Union. The AU Summit decision to designate 2015 as the year for the empowerment of women is a much-needed initiative.

South Africa has a special place in Swedish history and political life. I am looking forward to these days in your country to listen, exchange ideas and participate in our common task of supporting peace, security and justice.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

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Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden increases humanitarian aid to Syria

Published 30 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

SVD 30 mars 2015 Tomorrow, the international community will come together in Kuwait for a donor conference concerning the Syrian crisis. Sweden will be there to show our strong commitment and continued support to the region and all those affected by the horrors of war.

Our message during the conference will be clear. We must not abandon people who are entirely dependent on the rest of the world for their survival. This is why we will make a pledge for increased support.

There is a fear that the donor community will tire after four years and that the spotlight will be directed elsewhere. That the endless violence and the lack of a political solution will lead to resignation among the donors. But the world must not give up. The Syrian crisis is one of the most serious crises of our time. More than 220 000 people have been killed and 12 million people – half of the country's population – have been forced to flee, often more than once; and of these, eight million are refugees in their own country. They are trapped in the terror of violence between various armed groups that are deliberately directing their attacks against civilian targets. Not least the barrel bombings of the Assad regime cause immense damage and injury in civilian areas.

## Women and children worst affected by the war

As always, women and children are the worst affected by the war. This has been aggravated by the advance of ISIL. The extreme control and the terrible abuses being committed by ISIL are a cause for concern not just in

terms of security today, but also in terms of what the future may bring. All the while, we are hearing reports of how regime soldiers use rape as a military means of instilling fear into and repressing local communities. The abuses are continuing in the refugee camps outside the country's borders, where desperation and poverty are growing and humanitarian organisations report that increasing numbers of girls are being forced into marriages. And yet in the midst of this chaos, it is the women who are trying to bring normality back to everyday life, get food on the table and a roof over their heads, and care for the children and the elderly.

A real concern is the situation of children. We are witnessing a lost generation grow up before our eyes, and we must join forces to combat this. Over two million children in Syria are not attending school, and the same applies to over half of the child refugees outside the country – 600 000 children and rising. They are the future of Syria, and the growing hopelessness among child refugees risks turning into a powder keg with security implications for Sweden, too.

## SEK 350 million in humanitarian support for Syria 2015

The difficulties of working inside Syria for help organisations and the protracted nature of the conflict must not deter donors. Sweden is therefore increasing its commitment in the Syrian crisis in a number of ways:

Sweden is stepping up its humanitarian operation. Because the situation is getting worse and the conflict is spreading further into the neighbouring countries, Sweden will pledge at the conference tomorrow SEK 350 million in humanitarian support for 2015 to alleviate the Syrian crisis. This is an increase on last year's initial pledge of SEK 270 million to Syria and the affected neighbouring countries. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency are following developments closely and if the situation deteriorates further there may be a need for more support. Special measures will be taken to protect women and girls from forced marriages, kidnapping and sexual violence.

Syria's neighbouring countries – Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, for example – are taking in by far the largest proportion of refugees from Syria. Three million people have so far sought refuge there. The EU must do more to support them. Sweden, together with Germany, has taken in the absolute majority of Syrian asylum seekers in the EU. Sweden has taken in some 65

000 people, including stateless people, since the war started in 2011. This can be compared with the approximately 220 000 in the EU as a whole, a figure that includes those taken in by Sweden.

## New aid strategy for Syria

Sweden pushed for the adoption of the UN Security Council resolutions on improving access for humanitarian personnel, and we are now taking forceful action to ensure that these are respected. Sweden is one of the largest donors in the Syrian crisis and has a strong voice in the UN bodies. We are working systematically with the UN on the ground to find ways for help to reach vulnerable groups inside Syria. This has its problems, but many people are receiving help. Since 2011, Sweden has provided SEK 1.3 billion for everything from blankets and food to medical care and women's centres.

Sweden is adopting a new aid strategy for the Syrian crisis comprising SEK 1.5 billion over the coming years. The conflict in Syria continues to deteriorate and we therefore need a long-term and flexible strategy for how Sweden can best contribute to alleviating the suffering caused by the war, and how we can support democratic forces and mitigate the impact on neighbouring countries. It should bridge the unnecessary gap that currently exists between urgent disaster relief and long-term development work. This is about creating the conditions for a future Syria after the war, where peace can gain a foothold. Priorities will be children's schooling and support to civil society organisations that are working inside and outside the country under very difficult conditions to build confidence between people. These peaceful counterforces – often women's organisations – need the support and recognition of the rest of the world. This is crucial if there is to be a civil society that can build democracy once we have achieved peace.

Aid will not end the war or people's suffering. This will require a political solution. However, the lack of a political solution makes aid important. Used correctly, it can save lives and create better conditions for rebuilding the country. It will be a lifeline for very many people, make life that little more tolerable and give people the sense that others around the world are on their side.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Plugging Government into Peace

Published 23 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

## Building Peace 23 mars 2015

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are transforming relationships. Networks are rapidly replacing hierarchies; the power of actors to effect change increasingly depends on the number of connections they have rather than the name of their institution; and what we call “mass communication” can nowadays be sparked by a single individual. But modern forms of interaction made possible by ICTs, particularly social media, can also enable governments to engage directly with citizens in new ways. An important part of this dynamic is ensuring that relevant actors play a key role in conflict resolution and that women, in particular, are able to take part in emerging networks. To take full advantage of the technological revolution, governments need to find new ways to interact with the public.

When Sweden recognized Palestine as a state, the news spread quickly around the world—in part due to the strong opinions surrounding the topic. But an additional important explanation is the new social media system the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) has been developing to enhance its digital public diplomacy and the reach of news like this. Since 2013, most Swedish embassies have had a presence on Facebook and Twitter. Recently, the Swedish MFA launched a dedicated news portal, designed to increase discussion around Swedish foreign policy in social media by drawing on the expertise in the organization.

The process of enhancing the Ministry’s use of social media is part of a wider push that acknowledges a shift in citizen mobility and behavior. Hierarchies are giving way to networks of people who self-organize organically to collaborate and make their voices heard. New forms for engagement and innovation are emerging that draw on the opportunities that lie in new information technologies and leverage the power of networks to approach problem solving in new ways.

Although technology in itself is neutral and can be used for both good and evil, this positive potential must be duly recognized.

In conjunction with technological developments, security policy is expanding to encompass issues such as gender equality, climate change, migration, freedom of speech, and public health. The security of individuals and their right to freedom of association and expression are key issues for advocates of smart power.

People's everyday concerns are intrinsically linked in a fine web of relations and interactions, whose exponential growth is often driven by technological development. One case in point, where Sweden is using ICTs to empower women and girls in new ways, is the work of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to increase socio-economic equality between women and men by ensuring equal access to technology.

At its best, technology helps create social development and real, people-to-people communication across borders and conflict lines. It can generate a global sense of community in which people can find common ground. At its worst, virtual communications can be misused to spread propaganda and hatred, and fuel conflict. Conflict thrives where there is a lack of understanding and where access to information varies.

As a result, technology's potential, for good and bad is expansive and needs to be explored thoroughly. Although technology in itself is neutral and can be used for both good and evil, its positive potential must be duly recognized. This is why the Swedish MFA takes learning and engagement in this new environment seriously: in order to understand and inform the new landscape, we need to be part of it.

To respond to this new reality, the Swedish MFA is increasingly engaging directly with global audiences, an initiative which has raised new questions regarding the way the organization interacts with the public. There is a growing need for an agile capacity for collaboration with emerging actors, and we need to do things differently if we want to make an impact. In the past, it often sufficed for foreign ministries to deliver official messages of their governments' policies, but today their role is much more dynamic—as partners and nodes in the exchange processes, both listening and expressing their views with a genuine curiosity about important issues and the countries they engage with.

In keeping with the modern transformation of this role, the Swedish MFA is

actively exploring novel forms of engagement that tap into the field of digital innovation. These initiatives include the Stockholm Initiative for Digital Diplomacy (SIDD), a co-creative event bringing together various actors from the field of digital diplomacy for a workshop on the future of diplomacy in a connected world.

The first SIDD event took place in 2014 in Stockholm and gathered digital diplomats from all over the world. The second edition is a multifaceted campaign combining digital content with convenings at multiple locations across the globe. The campaign, Midwives4all focuses on women's rights to safe motherhood and the importance of midwifery to health and development. According to a recent United Nations (UN) study, well-trained midwives can prevent two-thirds of deaths among women and newborns, illustrating that midwives should be recognized as heroes. This is an urgent matter and I will personally take part in the campaign to highlight the importance of investing in midwifery services globally.

In collaboration with the Dutch Embassy in London, Sweden has also developed the Diplohack concept, an experimental platform for combining the specific skill sets of diplomats, social entrepreneurs, tech developers and designers, journalists, academics, NGOs, and businesses to 'hack' traditional diplomatic problems in start-up style groups.

Although these small innovation hubs function as laboratories, they also represent a genuine intention to stay informed about technological developments. This intention reinforces a foreign policy based on Sweden's priorities for a safer world: to build our security in solidarity with others, our top priorities are: a feminist foreign policy empowering women, an active UN policy, disarmament, and sustainable development. Our experience is that constant change is the new norm. Those who are innovative and take initiative, however modest, will be able to promote positive development. We therefore need to be explorers and adapt to new circumstances as we aim for our policy objectives.

Importantly, technology is now making information flow from places that previously were blank spots on the mental map of policymakers. We can no longer say "we did not know," when images and videos of conflict and human rights violations recorded on smartphones and distributed over the Internet, are reaching us from the most remote places in the world.

Big data has opened new pathways to development and conflict resolution. The information technology revolution sweeping across the globe is also



opening the way for many socially beneficial applications of technology. By analyzing mobile money transactions (while keeping them anonymous), the United Nations Global Pulse, a flagship initiative on the use of big data, has been able to demonstrate the feasibility of creating early-warning systems for food security. Flowminder, a Swedish foundation, combines anonymized mobile phone data with traditional surveys to solve public health problems, such as mapping the spread of Ebola. A further example is that through careful and real-time analysis of social media, it is now possible to quickly pinpoint ceasefire violations.

The positive effects of technology, the Internet and big data for development must not be overlooked in discussions of issues of surveillance and privacy now taking place at the UN and elsewhere. The use of big data will be crucial to ensuring that we know what is happening, not least in relation to the new sustainable development goals currently under negotiation at the UN.

It is safe to say that policymakers and diplomats—just like most of us—have not yet fully grasped the consequences of the mobile revolution as it comes to unfold, a key vehicle for interconnectedness and the foundation of the global village. With all the data in the world accessible via smartphones in our pockets, government still needs to figure out how to close the gap between analysis and action. The distance between organizations working in the field and decision-making at the political level is too great. While previously, we were unable to take action because we did not know enough, today we are hampered by the huge volume of available information. As policymakers, we need better ways to distinguish signals from noise.

Technology in itself cannot resolve conflicts. But in a world where nearly everyone has—or will soon have—access to communication technologies, the question is whether we will be able to resolve conflicts without technology. It is sometimes argued that small-scale initiatives, such as those developed by the Swedish MFA or other stakeholders, are futile when it comes to peacebuilding and conflict resolution. This view overlooks the importance of initiating positive processes in collaboration with other stakeholders. Progress will depend on our capacity to join forces with the people who are currently working to create a better future, and the times we live in suggest that technology will be at the heart of this work.



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Midwives4All: Professionals Who Put Women First Have the Power to Change the Future

Published 08 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Huffington Post 8 mars 2015 Today, on International Women's Day, Sweden is speaking out in support of every woman's right to a midwife. The midwifery profession and workforce have the power to save thousands of lives each year.

They therefore deserve our full recognition and respect. High maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity, including devastating consequences such as stillbirth, need to be tackled urgently. In 2013 alone, an estimated 289,000 women died from complications related to pregnancy. Every year, nearly 3 million infants die in the first month of life and 2.6 million babies are stillborn.

The basic right to health and access to quality services for women and children is particularly important in crisis situations, including in conflict and post-conflict areas, and in regions affected by epidemics.

Last year, the Lancet published a series of articles on how scaling up the skilled midwifery workforce could prevent close to two-thirds of maternal and newborn deaths. The series was accompanied by a major report by UNFPA, WHO and the International Confederation of Midwives, outlining the state of midwifery in 73 countries. Together, they represent a significant effort to highlight the importance of midwifery in saving lives and empowering women.

Based on these reports, and Sweden's international engagement in improving

women's health, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs recently launched Midwives4All, an initiative to accelerate these efforts. We hope to spark engagement and more discussion on the benefits of investing in the midwifery workforce, while highlighting the benefits of evidence-based maternal health services.

Our aim is to strengthen women's rights, improve women's access to resources and increase women's representation. Midwives do not only improve the chance of a safe pregnancy and delivery; they provide the full continuum of care throughout a woman's life, and by doing so they play a key role in building sustainable societies. Yet, in many countries, this field of expertise is still not represented.

We are involving our embassies and the collaborative force of our networks to reach out in a connected world where citizens, organizations and decision-makers come together to take on urgent challenges. Using the best available data to inform our discussions, we will help to spread best practices that offer hope for women all over the world.

Why, you may ask. Because we are convinced it needs to be a top priority. Investing in midwifery is not only economically sound and life-saving. Midwifery transforms societies. It promotes women's human rights, women's health and gender equality as a whole.

In this way, Midwives4All is a part of the Swedish Government's ambition to pursue a feminist foreign policy, which aims to strengthen women's rights, improve women's access to resources and increase women's representation. This initiative will contribute in a very concrete way to these overriding objectives, and our ambition is to turn a piece of our own country's history into global progress.

In Sweden, midwives work alongside doctors and other health professionals and play a crucial role in health and welfare. This is one of the reasons Sweden invests in midwifery both nationally and internationally through Sida, our development agency. Sweden supports capacity building in countries ranging from Afghanistan, Zambia and Bangladesh to Somalia and Guatemala. Another reason is our commitment to human rights and equality as the basis for development.

As early as 1751, the Collegium Medicum reported to the Swedish Parliament that, "Of 651 cases of women who died in childbirth, 400 could have been saved if they had had adequate access to a midwife." At that time,

the maternal mortality rate in Sweden was almost 900 deaths per 100,000 live births. This is higher than in almost any country in the world today.

One century later, Sweden's maternal mortality rate had decreased to 230 due to the presence of midwives throughout the country trained in safe delivery practices, including infection prevention. Investment in midwives later became a natural part in building our welfare state, where maternal and child health services were provided free of charge, with delivery wards and women's clinics leading to further reductions in maternal mortality.

The evidence is already out there. #Midwives4All therefore aims to connect people, to break the barriers that prevent change and bring together citizens, NGOs, midwives, policymakers and doers. We are seizing the opportunities offered by newer information technologies.

Let us begin by recognizing the midwifery profession as the life-saver and agent of change that it is and can be. I hope that many of you today will be able to join the conversation and work with us on a shared vision -- midwives4all.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden producing new strategy for Syrian crisis

Published 03 February 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Dagens Nyheter 3 februari 2015 Today, there are almost 50 million displaced people in the world. This is the highest number since the Second World War. They are fleeing from oppression, war and terrorism.

There are many trouble spots around the world, but the current situation in Syria and Iraq looks increasingly like the worst humanitarian disaster of our time. The civil war and the ISIL reign of terror have so far claimed 200 000 human lives. There are more than 10 million displaced Syrians, almost half of the country's population. Seven million remain in the country, but more than three million have managed to leave. Most are in the neighbouring countries of Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Lebanon.

Around six per cent, or 200 000, of the Syrian refugees have come to Europe. Around 60 000 people have sought asylum in Sweden.

When we meet United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres on Tuesday, our main messages will be that the world must come together to find a solution to the conflict and help the people fleeing from it. This is a human duty. We vow that Sweden will continue to take constructive action in this respect through our foreign policy, aid policy and migration policy. The work of the High Commissioner for Refugees deserves every support.

Only a political solution can end the conflict. The new Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura has our wholehearted support. He has taken a more localised approach and wants to de-escalate the violence levels and 'freeze' the conflict, starting in Aleppo. In addition, the efforts of the international community to cut off support to terrorism continue, for example by

preventing the financing of terrorism and stopping people from travelling as foreign terrorist fighters.

At the same time, ISIL ravages must be stopped so that people are not forced to flee. The flow of weapons, personnel and money to the terrorist sect must be cut off. Those travelling from other countries, such as Sweden, to fight for ISIL must be stopped. Obviously, the conflict and the war are the root problem and the cause of people being forced to flee.

The world has a clear humanitarian responsibility to help the people affected. It is chiefly Syria's neighbours who are now taking that responsibility. Sweden is providing considerable support to alleviate the suffering of people in and outside Syria who are affected by the hell of war. Since the conflict started in 2011, Sweden has contributed more than SEK 1.5 billion. We are now also one of the largest donors to both the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

Unfortunately, a political solution in Syria seems remote and the prospects of refugee repatriation are currently small. Hundreds of thousands of children in the region are growing up in camps where most cannot attend school. Families are living under extreme financial pressure and humanitarian conditions with little means of support. The frustration and vulnerability is hitting women and children hard. A generation risks being lost and the seeds of future problems are being sown.

The situation is exerting severe pressure on the neighbouring countries. Lebanon alone, which is the same size as Skåne, has taken in more than one million refugees. This creates unease and instability. It is evident that the humanitarian operations are inadequate. They must be linked to long-term support – to neighbouring countries, too. This is something the UNHCR has persistently pointed out to the leaders of the international community. Sweden supports the UNHCR appeal and the Government is now producing a new strategy for the Syrian crisis that covers both the urgent needs and the long-term measures to create better living conditions and support to public services in the neighbouring countries.

For decades, Sweden has offered protection to many people fleeing war and oppression. We have a tradition of solidarity that we should be proud of. We are still keeping up this tradition as 30 000 Syrians sought asylum in Sweden in 2014.

Sweden also works closely with the UNHCR on resettlement of quota

refugees directly from refugee camps, in for example Jordan and Lebanon, to western countries. Resettlement provides protection to individuals and also relieves the pressure on the neighbouring countries receiving large numbers of refugees. Sweden, via the Swedish Migration Board, very successfully led this work in 2014. More than 50 000 Syrians were offered a place of refuge in one of the 24 countries participating in the initiative.

This was positive, but more countries need to take responsibility for the reception of refugees. The Government is therefore working actively to encourage all EU Member States to participate in the resettlement initiative. In the EU, we are also pushing for more countries to receive refugees in a humane and legally secure manner. We welcome Mr Guterres's new proposals that all UN Member States should collectively fund part of the important work of the UNHCR through compulsory contributions.

There is no simple solution to the catastrophic situation of the world's refugees or to the bloody conflict in Syria. In order to really make a difference, taking responsibility is required within all of our respective areas of responsibility. Sweden will continue to be a close and strong partner of the UNHCR in its important work for the world's refugees. Our country will actively stand up for those people who are subjected to war and oppression, wherever they are.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation  
Morgan Johansson, Minister for Justice and Migration



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# How UN peacekeeping operations can become more effective

Published 27 January 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Dagens Nyheter 27 januari 2015 The UN's peacekeeping operations are facing many challenges. Demand for UN missions is increasing. At the same time, the resources available are limited and must be managed prudently.

The nature of international conflict has changed over the past 25 years. Interstate armed conflicts have been largely replaced by intrastate conflicts, often in countries with weak government institutions and impaired capacity to protect their own populations. Today, 1.5 billion people live in fragile and conflict-affected countries or countries in which criminal violence is rife.

This places new demands on international crisis management and peacekeeping operations. What were largely military commitments in the past have become more complex, multidimensional UN missions involving military personnel, police and civilian functions acting side by side.

The UN, the EU and other regional actors must strengthen and adapt their peacekeeping instruments and capacities in order to handle current challenges. Following its failures in Rwanda and the Balkans in the mid-1990s, the UN implemented a comprehensive review of its peacekeeping operations. This resulted in a number of reforms, including the integration of civilian and military components in UN peace operations. Around the same time, the EU began developing its crisis management capacity which from the outset, at the initiative of Sweden and others, focused on civilian tools.

The UN has a central role to play in international crisis management, thanks to its legitimacy and widespread presence in the field. However, the global



organisation has limited resources at its disposal and a constant stream of new challenges to handle. It just doesn't add up.

The UN's peacekeeping operations are at a crossroads once again. In today's conflicts, it's more a matter of protecting civilians than monitoring ceasefires. New threats such as organised crime and terrorism also affect peacekeeping operations. The UN must sharpen its instruments once again. The UN Secretary-General therefore decided last year on a new review of UN peace operations. A high-level panel of experts has been appointed and is expected to submit a report later this spring.

Since 1996, Sweden has participated in the Challenges Forum, a unique international network of partner organisations. The Forum, which has representatives from six continents and 21 countries, helps to identify ways to meet the challenges facing international peace operations. The Folke Bernadotte Academy hosts the Challenges Forum International Secretariat.

In its latest report, the Challenges Forum presented 24 targeted recommendations on how to further develop UN peace operations. On behalf of all the partner organisations, we will today (27 January) hand over the report to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the UN Headquarters in New York. This handover takes place at a strategic time, as the report will be able to contribute to the UN's own review of its peacekeeping operations.

The report's recommendations include the following:

- That the UN must strengthen its capacity to identify and develop strategies to meet new transnational threats, such as terrorism and organised crime.
- That UN peace operations should use new technology to strengthen its capacity to obtain intelligence, and that Member States should make the necessary resources available to the UN to make this possible.
- That cooperation between the UN and regional organisations engaged in peace operations must be strengthened and streamlined.
- That integrated guidelines for implementing strategies in peace operations should be drafted, on gender equality issues for example.

Sweden wants to contribute actively to the UN's capacity to handle international conflicts in various ways. Therefore, Sweden is now strengthening its commitment to the UN within the areas of peace and security, sustainability, equality and gender equality. We are doing this by

pursuing important normative issues and by making concrete contributions to UN operations.

We are doing this by providing Swedish troops, police officers and civilian personnel to international peace operations. The most recent example is Sweden's current stationing of military personnel to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

We are doing this by pursuing the issue of ending sexual violence in conflict. This has been going on for centuries, but until now the issue and its victims have been silenced. It is only now, with the systematic collection of information and data on sexual violence, that we have understood the enormous breadth of these crimes – that principally target women and girls.

We are doing this by actively working to strengthen women's active engagement and participation in issues concerning peace and security. Sustainable peace can only be achieved if all competence is utilised. Women must be involved, both around the negotiating table and in the reconstruction of the country when the conflict has ended.

Sweden's various contributions to the UN's peacekeeping operations and its candidacy for the Security Council 2017–2018 are central expressions of the country's strengthened commitment to the UN. Sweden wants to take responsibility and actively participate in ensuring that the UN is better equipped to handle today's global challenges.

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Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Sven-Eric Söder, Director-General, Folke Bernadotte  
Academy



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Social dimension of the EU must be strengthened

Published 31 December 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

Expressen, Hufvudstadsbladet 31 december 2014  
Tomorrow it will be 20 years since Sweden and Finland together joined the European Union. Despite the challenges we have faced in connection with the economic crisis, this was a wise decision and the practical benefits of membership are well known. Today, Swedes and Finns can live, travel, study, work and retire wherever they like in the EU. The common market creates jobs and gives us an increased supply of goods at better prices. It will be further broadened by a digital internal market.

As a new year dawns, and in the light of global uncertainty, we would like to emphasise what the development of the EU has meant for prosperity and security in eastern Europe. Since we joined, the EU has been further enlarged by the accession of 13 countries in eastern and central Europe. Our countries played a key role in this process, particularly by supporting the progress of the Baltic countries towards membership.

The enlargement of the EU has proved to be the most important approach to peace, sustainable growth and prosperity in Europe – as recognised by the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the EU. The EU has become the world's largest integrated economy, with a population of more than 500 million. The EU economy has overtaken the US economy and accounts for almost a third of world trade. This development entails obligations.

The EU should continue along its chosen path and we see several areas in which Sweden and Finland will act together and continue to drive further development.

**Enlargement:** Turkey and the countries of the Western Balkans, which just 20 years ago were at war, have chosen the path towards modernisation and membership. That path must continue by way of reforms and fair conditions for all. We will work to ensure that the EU stands by its commitments to these countries.

**Neighbourhood:** we will actively participate in joint EU efforts to promote a diplomatic solution to the conflict in Ukraine. The EU must take a clear stand in support of the right of all neighbouring countries to make sovereign decisions and choose their own future, including concrete support and countermeasures when this right is called into question. We want stable and prosperous neighbours free of conflicts with other neighbours.

In addition, the EU must equip itself better to meet the challenges in the countries to the east and south. Tunisia, which has succeeded in consolidating its democratic development in a demanding environment, is an example of a country that deserves the full support of the EU.

**Crisis management:** our countries took the initiative for EU civilian crisis management and are leading contributors to EU civilian missions. We have been involved in all the EU's military and civilian missions, since we see the EU as a crucial actor for peace and security. We must continue to develop the EU's capability in this area.

**Trade:** a trade agreement with the United States will offer the EU a new opportunity to create sustainable growth and more jobs – but the agreement must also be a model for others in terms of trade, product safety, environmental protection and workers' rights, with transparent investment rules that respect every country's own objectives. It must build on democratic political decisions.

The EU is also facing serious challenges. Priority has been given to deregulation and creating common markets rather than to building a social Europe with cross-border democracy. Today there are almost 25 million unemployed in the EU. Citizens' rights in the labour market are under great pressure.

Consequently, the EU's social dimension, as well as its democratic

legitimacy, must be strengthened. The EU should focus on issues where the Union provides added value and makes a real difference to the individual citizen. This will also strengthen the EU's legitimacy and put it in a better position to respond to populism and xenophobia.

The first 20 years are already history. In a serious global situation, we share the same ambition: as the balance of economic and political power changes in the world, the EU must develop as a global actor for peace, security, sustainability and equality.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden  
Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finland



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# All nuclear weapons must be abolished

Published 08 December 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

Svenska Dagbladet Brännpunkt 8 december 2014

Today the third international conference on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons starts in Vienna. A large delegation from the Government Offices and the Riksdag will be there to represent Sweden.

- In these unsettled times it is tremendously important to act vigorously to promote disarmament.
- The Government is now strengthening disarmament efforts across a broad front.
- Our line is clear: all nuclear weapons must be abolished.

A nuclear weapon explosion would have appalling humanitarian consequences. Next year, 70 years will have passed since a single nuclear weapon killed 90 000 people in Hiroshima and levelled the city with the ground. Humanity must never forget this. The 2 000 nuclear tests that have taken place around the world have poisoned land and water for many years to come.

Last week one of the survivors of Hiroshima, Setsuko Thurlow, visited the Riksdag. She bore witness to the horrors of nuclear weapons. And she described the after-effects that she and tens of thousands of others have to live with – for generations. She has made it her life's work to spread the message: this must never happen again.

It is therefore welcome that more than 150 countries have now endorsed the international initiative focusing specially on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

One of my first decisions as Minister for Foreign Affairs was that Sweden

would also join the initiative. The reason was simple: nuclear weapons must never be used again. The Government of Fredrik Reinfeldt put Sweden among the spectators and was unwilling to participate in these concrete efforts against nuclear weapons. I found this line strange. We must work intensively towards this end, in new forums as well. I take this extremely seriously, as does the Swedish Government.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the cornerstone in anti-nuclear weapon efforts to prevent proliferation and achieve disarmament. Next year's Review Conference will be important and must address the challenges we are facing. More than 16 000 nuclear weapons remain to be decommissioned. That being so, it is particularly worrying that States are modernising their nuclear weapons.

It is high time to heed President Obama's call in Prague and Berlin to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in defence doctrines and negotiate significant reductions in nuclear weapons arsenals. I call on Russia to move forward on this together with the United States. We are particularly concerned about the presence in our vicinity of tactical 'battlefield' nuclear weapons and call on all States with such forces to withdraw and abolish them. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty must also be permitted to enter into force.

It is also important that North Korea dismantles its nuclear weapons programme and that a peaceful solution to the nuclear technology issue is reached with Iran. India, Israel and Pakistan, which have not yet acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, are called upon to join the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon states and, until then, to live up to the principles of the Treaty.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are a consistent theme of Sweden's foreign policy and extend to other types of weapons as well. The use of chemical weapons struck indiscriminately against civilians in Syria last year and regrettably has been continued this year by a number of chlorine attacks. This must end. It is also important to make biological substances secure so as to prevent their use as weapons. Small and light weapons threaten and harm people every day. The UN Arms Trade Treaty can help to control illegal trade. The Government is now moving to raise Sweden's disarmament profile in a number of areas.

In the times we live in, it must be strongly emphasised that it would be horrific if decisions of life and death were delegated to machines. Continued

discussions on autonomous weapons systems are therefore necessary. These should be held within the framework of the international convention prohibiting or regulating conventional weapons that have serious humanitarian consequences.

Setsuko Thurlow talked about the great concern that she and other Hiroshima survivors feel: how the bomb – even today, nearly 70 years later – affects her children and grandchildren, future great-grandchildren and their children. It is the responsibility of humanity to ensure that the world gets rid of these diabolical weapons.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs





Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden's commitment to Ukraine deepens

Published 26 November 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

Ukrainska Pravda 26 november 2014

Today I am making my first visit to Ukraine as Minister for Foreign Affairs. Today the Riksdag is also ratifying the uniquely comprehensive EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. These two events send a clear message: Sweden's commitment to Ukraine continues and is being deepened.

The Government's position on Ukraine enjoys firm support in the Riksdag and Swedish public opinion. Sweden has always stood up for an open Europe. We uphold Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union regarding the conditions for EU membership. Since our own accession to the EU, we have been active in advancing EU enlargement policy and efforts to become integrated with countries in eastern Europe, through the Eastern Partnership, for example. Ukraine is an important country in this regard.

The Government's policies follow three parallel tracks: coordinated measures by the EU against Russia's aggression, support for Ukraine's reform agenda and long-term efforts for peaceful development in our part of the world.

For the Swedish Government, it goes without saying that we must continue to support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This support rests on the principles of international law, and thus the Ukrainian people's natural right to make their own decisions on the future of their country. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol and its military aggression in eastern Ukraine are in breach of international law. I would like to emphasise the gravity of the fact that these breaches of the principles of our world order have been committed by a permanent member of the UN Security Council, which has a special responsibility for peace and security.

Sweden's voice will be strong and clear in support of Ukraine and the sanctions against Russia we have agreed in the EU. The destabilisation of Ukraine must cease, and the Minsk Protocol must be respected. EU Member States decided as recently as last week to extend the list of people subjected to EU travel restrictions and the freezing of funds. EU Member States also agreed to consider additional new sanction areas if the situation so requires.

The outcome of the Ukrainian parliamentary elections in October confirmed the desire for reforms. We would like to see progress towards a stable democracy governed by the rule of law, an open economy and increasing prosperity and security for all citizens, and greater respect for fundamental human rights. Strengthening our economic ties and identifying necessary reforms to ensure continued EU integration will support Ukraine in its transition to a functioning market economy based on the rule of law. The Riksdag's ratification of the Association Agreement is an expression of Sweden's long-term support and our desire to deepen relations with Ukraine in all areas.

EU integration, however, requires broad-based and radical reforms. This means reforms to ensure an independent and effective rule of law, and decentralisation to bring public power closer to the people. This means transparency in public administration, combating corruption and increasing gender equality.

The difficulties must in no way be underestimated. Years of misrule have left deep wounds. As has Russian aggression. But a better future is possible – if everyone takes their responsibility: political leaders, who must not be allowed to repeat the mistake of the 2004 Orange Revolution, when personal ambitions eclipsed national interests; civil society and Ukrainian citizens, whose strength is needed to advance change; and the rest of the world. Sweden will do what it can.

Alongside our efforts in the EU, we will continue our extensive bilateral development assistance of more than SEK 200 million per year. We are helping to strengthen democracy and contributing support to concrete projects to strengthen protection of human rights, rule of law and anti-corruption measures. We are supporting institutional reforms and a continued strong role for civil society in reform efforts. We are among the leading foreign partners when it comes to energy-efficiency measures that can make Ukraine less dependent on foreign gas. We are also contributing humanitarian support as winter approaches, including SEK 35 million to various international actors to help the people in eastern Ukraine who have

been hardest hit by the conflict.

Just as Ukraine needs a long-term strategy for its development, we need to work together with a long-term view to create conditions for easing tensions and promoting peaceful development in our part of the world. This must take place step by step and methodically, through candid dialogue based on the principles of international law. This is a difficult but necessary challenge. A united EU and coherent action with our partners, rooted in our common basic values, are of decisive importance if we are to succeed in achieving mutual security in a new era.

The challenges for Ukraine today are enormous. But we have also seen the power and determination displayed at Maidan, when hundreds of thousands of people braved the cold of winter in Kiev to demonstrate against misrule. Demands – which inspire hope that a better future is possible.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# The Government will decide today to recognise the State of Palestine

Published 30 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

DN Debatt 30 oktober 2014

The Government will decide today to recognise the State of Palestine. This is an important step that confirms the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

Sweden's traditionally close ties with the State of Israel are now complemented by an equivalent relationship with the other party in the two-state solution that Israelis, Palestinians and a united international community see as the path to lasting peace in the Middle East.

Our decision comes at a critical time. Over the last year, we have seen how the peace talks have again stalled, how new settlement decisions on occupied Palestinian land have hampered a two-state solution and how violence returned to Gaza. Today's recognition is a contribution to a better future for a region that for far too long has been marked by frozen negotiations, destruction and frustration.

By recognising the State of Palestine, we want first of all to lend our support to the moderate Palestinian forces – those who will manage the complex Palestinian state-building process and those who will soon again have to sit at the negotiating table.

Secondly, we want to facilitate an agreement by making the parties in these negotiations less unequal. The objective is to enable Israel and Palestine to live within mutually recognised borders, with the 1967 borders as the basis and Jerusalem as the capital of two states, and where any land swaps will only be accepted if negotiated by the parties.

And thirdly, we hope to contribute to more hope and optimism among the

young Palestinians and Israelis who might otherwise risk being radicalised in the belief that there is no alternative to violence and the status quo. We want our recognition to say the same thing to the six-year-old child in Gaza who has already experienced three wars as to six-year-olds in Israel: we still believe in a peace agreement based on the State of Israel living side by side in peace and security with a democratic, cohesive and viable Palestinian state.

The Government considers that the international law criteria for the recognition of the State of Palestine have been satisfied.

There is a territory, albeit with non-defined borders. There is also a population. And there is a government with the capacity for internal and external control.

In addition, the international community has deemed Palestine to be well positioned for the establishment of a state; in other words, it has the capacity to assume the obligations of a state.

It is true that the Palestinian Authority does not have full control over Palestine, neither in the West Bank nor in Gaza. As far as Gaza is concerned, following the formation of Palestinian technocratic unity government and the reconciliation agreement between Hamas and Fatah, the capacity for internal cohesion has been enhanced. Not to recognise Palestine because of the Israeli occupation would be contrary to the international law principle of 'no fruits of aggression'.

The Government's assessment that the international law criteria have been fulfilled is shared by international law experts, including Professor Ove Bring, Professor Said Mahmoudi and Professor Pål Wrange, who recently wrote an opinion piece on this subject in *Dagens Nyheter* (20 October).

Sweden has previously recognised states – Croatia in 1992 and Kosovo in 2008 – even though they lacked effective control over parts of their territory. Palestine is similarly a special case. Now as then, there are strong political arguments for why recognition – a decision regarding Palestine already taken by more than 130 states – is the right way to go.

In 2009 EU Member States reiterated their readiness to recognise a Palestinian State, when appropriate. We are now ready to lead the way. In view of the difficult situation in the region and in light of the international law analysis, the Government sees no reason to further delay a Swedish

decision. We hope that this may show others the way forward.

Sweden's recognition of the State of Palestine will be followed by enhanced efforts to support the development of democracy and human rights in Palestine. Recognition also entails greater responsibility. We will make clear demands on Palestine, just as we do on Israel. These will include fighting corruption, respecting civil and political rights and increasing the influence of women. Obviously, this also means a complete renunciation of violence.

There are those who will argue that today's decision is premature. If anything, I fear it is too late. The Government will now, together with the other EU countries, the United States and other regional and international actors, work to support renewed negotiations on a final status settlement. Such a settlement must be negotiated in accordance with the principles of international law and guarantee both the Palestinians' and Israelis' legitimate demands for national self-determination and security.

Israel and Palestine are already living side by side. The goal is to be able to do so in peaceful coexistence with secure and recognised borders. The purpose of Sweden's recognition is to contribute to such a future.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Convention on the Rights of the Child to become law

Published 20 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

Svenska Dagbladet 20 oktober 2014 Children have rights – the right to life, play and learning. This means all children: regardless of whether your name is Maria or Mariam and whether you live in Borlänge or Bamako.

This November marks 25 years since the UN adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. So far, 193 countries have undertaken to respect, protect and promote the rights of the child. Much has improved since the Convention was adopted. But unfortunately, huge challenges still remain.

Developments in Syria, Iraq, Palestine, South Sudan and Liberia are brutal reminders of how children's rights are violated on a daily basis. Minors are cynically used as child soldiers, children are subjected to violence and exploitation, and girls are prevented from attending school, forced into marriage and subjected to life-threatening pregnancies.

A few days ago, Anna Hägg-Sjöquist and Pia Stavås Meier from the children's charity Plan Sverige urged the Government to prioritise children's rights in foreign policy and international development cooperation.

Our new cooperation government will do so, with great force and determination. Sweden must be a leading global force for the rights of the child and for gender equality. In the Statement of Government Policy, we said that Sweden's voice must always be clear and unambiguous when human dignity is violated, and that we will pursue a feminist foreign policy. Poverty reduction, sexual and reproductive health and rights and the fight against discrimination will be given high priority in the years ahead.

The UN has an important role to play in this, and the new Government will

give higher priority to UN cooperation. We will actively pursue these issues in view of the new global development agenda due to be negotiated by the UN member states ahead of the UN Summit in September 2015.

Today, we are among the very largest financiers of the UN's global development work. Via the UN, Sweden has contributed to a reduction of almost fifty per cent in the number of children dying before the age of five, down from 12.6 million in 1990 to 6.6 million in 2012. Last year alone, UNICEF provided water to 24 million people and sanitation to 7 million people, and gave 13.1 million people the possibility to wash their hands. In 2013, 3.6 million children in humanitarian crisis situations gained access to education. UNICEF has also contributed to 123 countries making all forms of sexual violence towards girls and boys punishable offences, and enabling 7 300 children with links to armed forces or groups to return to their families and communities.

At the same time, as ardent supporters of the UN we will not be afraid to criticise it if necessary. Swedish taxpayers' money must be used efficiently, and the UN needs to be reformed in order to be able to tackle the challenges of the future.

Human rights – including the rights of the child – are a cornerstone of Swedish foreign policy. But we also want to set a good example for other countries. Being a leader means leading the way. For this reason we will now take the next step, and begin the work to make the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child law in Sweden.

Standing up for children's rights and working for greater social and gender equality in the world will be the hallmarks of the new Government's work. As the ministers responsible for foreign affairs, development cooperation and children, we will shoulder our share of the responsibility for ensuring that children are able to enjoy their incontrovertible right to be just that – children.





Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström shortly to leave the Government and her role as Minister for Foreign Affairs

Published 06 September 2019

The Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström has informed Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Löfven about her wish to leave the Government.

- For five years I have wholeheartedly devoted myself to promoting Sweden's security and prosperity in the world. To face the big challenges of our time, in cooperation with others.

- I now want to spend more time with my husband, my children and my grandchildren, says Ms Wallström.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström to host a ministerial meeting on nuclear disarmament

Published 07 June 2019

On 11 June, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will host an international ministerial meeting in Stockholm on disarmament and non-proliferation. This Swedish initiative will be the first meeting of its kind for many years, and there is a great deal of international interest.

The Government's goal is a world free of nuclear weapons, and the initiative to host this disarmament meeting is an important part of this work. The purpose of Tuesday's meeting is to discuss how governments can work together to create political pressure for disarmament and engagement ahead of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) next year.

“The situation in the world is critical, and the risk of nuclear arms use is greater than it has been for many years. We are taking this initiative because we must make vigorous efforts for disarmament,” says Ms Wallström. “The NPT is the cornerstone of international action for disarmament and non-proliferation. The nuclear-weapon states have made important commitments in this regard, and this is why we are focusing on discussing the NPT in particular when we meet on Tuesday,” she adds.

The discussions in Stockholm will be about reducing the role of nuclear weapons in doctrines, increasing transparency surrounding arsenals and looking into measures to reduce the risk of nuclear weapon use. The idea is that this type of action can contribute to strengthened confidence between

countries and thus also to a better cooperation climate in disarmament diplomacy.

“We have to mobilise political will and increase pressure on parties to actively participate in disarmament work within the framework of the NPT,” says Ms Wallström. “We hope that Tuesday’s meeting will make a contribution to positive progress in this work,” she says.

The 15 countries invited to attend are non-nuclear-weapon states committed to disarmament from all parts of the world and with different security policy conditions. The following countries are taking part: Argentina, Canada, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Spain and Switzerland.

For editorial offices

Media will need special accreditation from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to attend the press conference, which will take place after the meeting, and for the photo opportunity at the start of the meeting.

Accreditation application



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden to chair UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) 2019–2020

Published 20 March 2019

It is now clear that Sweden will be elected Chair of the IAEA Board of Governors for 2019–2020.

“It is a great pleasure and honour that Sweden has been entrusted with this prestigious assignment,” said Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström following the announcement.

“The IAEA plays a very important role in promoting peace, security and development. Our role as Chair of the Board is an important part of our efforts to ensure non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, which is a priority issue for the Government. At present, this particularly concerns the verification of Iran’s compliance with the nuclear accord, and the information that the IAEA may receive in the event of a nuclear disarmament agreement with North Korea,” Ms Wallström said.

The IAEA was created in 1956. The organisation is tasked with promoting the peaceful and secure use of nuclear energy while ensuring that nuclear material is not misused for military purposes. Under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, all non-nuclear-weapon states are subject to verification under the IAEA safeguards system. The post of Director-General of the IAEA was held for 36 consecutive years by two Swedes, Sigvard Eklund and Hans Blix, but this will be the first time Sweden will serve as Chair of the Board of Governors.

The assignment of Chair will be carried out by Sweden’s Permanent Representative to the IAEA, Ambassador Mikaela Kumlin Granit.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release

# The ministers' press contacts

Published 22 January 2019

Here are the contact details for the ministers' press secretaries.

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**Government Offices of Sweden**

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Employment, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Finance, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Government Offices

# New state secretaries at the Government Offices

Published 22 January 2019

The Government today appointed 31 state secretaries at the Government Offices. Former state secretaries have been dismissed from their positions. Most of the state secretaries have previously held corresponding positions at the Government Offices.

## Prime Minister's Office

The Government has appointed Nils Vikmång as the Prime Minister's State Secretary. The Government has also appointed Madeleine Harby Samuelsson and Karin Wallensteen as state secretaries to Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

The Government has appointed Paula Carvalho Olovsson as State Secretary to Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

The Government has appointed Mats Andersson and Maria Ferm as state secretaries in the coordinating committee at the Prime Minister's Office.

## Ministry of Employment

The Government has appointed Annika Dahl as State Secretary to Minister for Employment Ylva Johansson.

The Government has appointed Karin Strandås as State Secretary to Minister

for Gender Equality, with responsibility for anti-discrimination and anti-segregation, Åsa Lindhagen.

## Ministry of Finance

The Government has appointed Max Elger and Leif Jacobsson as state secretaries to Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson.

The Government has appointed Ulf Holm and Elin Olsson as state secretaries to Minister for Financial Markets and Housing, Deputy Minister for Finance, Per Bolund.

The Government has appointed Alejandro Firpo as State Secretary to Minister for Public Administration Ardan Shekarabi.

## Ministry of Defence

The Government has appointed Jan-Olof Lind as State Secretary to Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

## Ministry of Infrastructure

The Government has appointed Mattias Landgren as State Secretary to Minister for Infrastructure Tomas Eneroth.

The Government has appointed Sebastian De Toro as State Secretary to Minister for Energy and Digital Development Anders Ygeman.

## Ministry of Justice

The Government has appointed Catharina Espmark and Lars Westbratt as state secretaries to Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson.

The Government has appointed Elisabeth Backteman as State Secretary to Minister for Home Affairs Mikael Damberg.

## Ministry of Culture

The Government has appointed Helene Öberg as State Secretary to Minister for Culture and Democracy, with responsibility for sport, Amanda Lind.

## Ministry of the Environment

The Government has appointed Eva Svedling and Gunvor Ericson as state secretaries to Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister, Isabella Lövin.

## Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

The Government has appointed Stina Billinger and Emil Högberg as state secretaries to Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Ibrahim Baylan.

The Government has appointed Per Callenberg as State Secretary to Minister for Rural Affairs Jennie Nilsson.

## Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

The Government has appointed Maja Fjaestad as State Secretary to Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren.

## Ministry of Education and Research

The Government has appointed Erik Nilsson as State Secretary to Minister for Education Anna Ekström.

The Government has appointed Malin Cederfeldt Östberg as State Secretary to Minister for Higher Education and Research Matilda Ernkrans.

## Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Government has appointed Annika Söder as State Secretary for Foreign Affairs to Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

The Government has appointed Per Olsson Fridh as State Secretary to Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson.

The Government has appointed Niklas Johansson as State Secretary to Minister for Foreign Trade, with responsibility for Nordic affairs, Ann Linde.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden's centenary gift to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

Published 21 December 2018

As a gift from Sweden to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the Government has set up three cooperation funds to mark the countries' 100th anniversaries in 2018.

Following approval by the Riksdag, SEK 30 million has been set aside in three grants of SEK 10 million each, constituting the founding capital for three foundations with the aim of promoting broad people-to-people exchanges between Sweden and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, respectively.

The foundations will have a particular focus on promoting relations between young people. The Government invites businesses, organisations and private individuals in Sweden and the Baltic States to help ensure the funds grow, with the aim of creating lasting and dynamic relations in society, the economy and culture.

- Promoting contacts between young people in our countries is the main forward-looking purpose of these funds. This is how we want to invest in our common future, says Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström to take part in women foreign ministers' meeting in Canada

Published 20 September 2018

On 21–22 September, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will take part in the Women Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Montreal, Canada. The meeting will be co-led by Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs Chrystia Freeland and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini. Ms Wallström will also take part in a working breakfast with civil society representatives.

At the meeting, Ms Wallström will hold an address during the session on advancing global peace, security and prosperity within the framework of a rules-based international order, during which she will highlight Sweden's feminist foreign policy and experiences from Sweden's membership of the United Nations Security Council.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden launches new research collaboration for climate and security

Published 30 August 2018 Updated 30 August 2018

A new research collaboration for climate and security will be launched today in connection with World Water Week in Stockholm. The Stockholm Climate Security Hub brings together four Swedish research institutes that are world leaders in the area of climate and security. The aim is to promote knowledge development and policy dialogue in the area, not least to support the UN and other multilateral actors with evidence-based analyses.

The Stockholm Climate Security Hub comprises four world-class organisations in the area of climate and security: the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) and the Stockholm Resilience Centre (SRC). The initiative is financed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

“To address climate change and its effects, political decisions need to be based on facts. Security around the world will be affected, and greater knowledge is needed about exactly what forms these climate-related security risks will take and what we should do to deal with them. This is where Sweden can contribute,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

Highlighting the link between climate and security has been a priority for the

Government. The negative effects of climate change – such as rising sea levels, flooding and long-term drought – can aggravate social unrest and instability by affecting people’s access to water and food, their livelihoods and migration.

“We need to draw more attention to the link between climate and conflict. This is a priority issue for Sweden to promote peace and security internationally, not least in the UN Security Council. The Hub will be able to support the UN and other multilateral actors by providing the latest knowledge to contribute to more effective and evidence-based decision-making,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.





Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden to co-host high-level conference in Brussels on continued peace efforts in Somalia

Published 13 July 2018

On 16–17 July, Sweden, the Federal Government of Somalia and the EU will jointly host the annual Somalia Partnership Forum. Continued efforts for peace and development in Somalia will be discussed at the Forum.

Developments in Somalia are advancing gradually and there have been many positive outcomes in a variety of sectors. Despite major humanitarian challenges and continuing security threats, there is a clear trend of improved stability and development in Somalia.

At the same time, political reforms, including a strengthened federal structure, help ensure continued positive developments in terms of peace and security in the country. The latest parliamentary elections strengthened the proportion of women in the Somali parliament, with almost a quarter of its members now women.

"Somalia has taken incredibly important steps towards sustainable peace and development, and is setting an example for many other war-torn areas. The international community's commitments for continued positive developments in Somalia are crucial, and the Somalia Partnership Forum is an important element of this," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

Ms Wallström will co-host the Forum over two days in Brussels alongside EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini and President of Somalia Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed. A total of more than 60 delegations will participate in the Forum, which is expected to give continued strong support to the Somali Government's efforts for

sustainable peace and development.

As recently as earlier this month, the Swedish Government adopted a new strategy for Somalia, doubling Swedish aid to the country. Sweden's aid to Somalia will total SEK 3 billion for the period 2018–2022, allowing extended support for Somalia's peace- and state-building efforts. The new cooperation strategy for Somalia makes Sweden the fourth-largest global donor to the country.

The Somalia Partnership Forum will bring together representatives of the EU, Somalia's neighbours, international donors, the AU, the UN, the World Bank and other international and regional organisations. The aim of the Forum is to follow up on earlier commitments and contribute to continued close cooperation and support for Somalia's development.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs and UN Deputy Secretary-General visit Chad and Niger ahead of UN Security Council meetings

Published 05 July 2018

On 5–8 July, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will visit Chad and Niger in the Sahel region of West Africa. With her on this visit, which coincides with Sweden's Presidency of the UN Security Council, will be UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed, Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, and the African Union's Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security Bineta Diop.

The joint visit aims to strengthen women's participation in decision-making and peace processes, community life and the economy, and to highlight the importance of tackling climate-related security risks.

"This is a unique visit to take our work on the women, peace and security agenda to the next level. The work of the Security Council needs to be underpinned by the fundamental insight that matters of peace and security concern everyone. The Security Council must make a difference where it is needed the most – in places where millions of women, men, girls and boys are living in the shadow of war, conflict and poverty. Sweden wants to highlight this during our presidency of the Security Council, so directly following the visit I will chair two special meetings of the Security Council on the situation of women in the Sahel region, and the link between climate

and security," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström to host Nordic-Baltic meeting in Stockholm

Published 15 June 2018 Updated 19 June 2018

On 19 June, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will host a Nordic-Baltic meeting with the Visegrad Four (V4): Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. The meeting will be held in Stockholm in light of Sweden's current coordinating role in the Nordic–Baltic Eight (NB8). Hungary currently chairs the Visegrad Group. The participating ministers will discuss the challenges facing Europe regarding the Eastern neighbourhood, security policy, the future of Europe and more.

The Foreign Ministers meeting in the NB8 + V4 format was originally a joint initiative of Poland and Sweden in 2013.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Hungary's Minister of Foreign Affairs Péter Szijjártó will hold a press conference in connection with the meeting.

Time: 19 June, 14.30

Venue: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Gustav Adolfs torg 1

Language: English

Media representatives enter via Kopparporten, Rosenbad 2, at 13.45.

Please bring your press credentials.

Registration required before 11.00 on Tuesday 19 June:

boel.lindbergh@gov.se



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Reminder: Margot Wallström to welcome foreign ministers from Baltic Sea states

Published 12 June 2018 Updated 15 June 2018

On 18 June, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will head a ministerial meeting in Stockholm of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). The meeting agenda will mainly focus on the future role of Baltic Sea cooperation, common security, rescue services, the battle against human trafficking and support for vulnerable children and young people.

Sweden has held the Presidency of the CBSS over the past year and will hand over the Presidency to Latvia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Edgars Rinkēvičs during the meeting.

In connection with the meeting participating ministers and other representatives of participating countries will be available for media.

Time: 18 June, late afternoon/early evening

Venue: Solliden, Skansen

The exact time and venue will be communicated to the media concerned.

Pre-registration is required by 14.00 on Monday 18 to:  
[boel.lindbergh@gov.se](mailto:boel.lindbergh@gov.se)

Please bring valid press card.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Conference on the Baltic Sea Region

Published 11 June 2018

More than 150 policymakers, researchers and practitioners will gather in Stockholm at Fotografiska on June 11–12 for the international conference addressing the complexity of societal security challenges in the Baltic Sea region.

Co-hosted by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the conference will discuss strategies to provide safety for people and build effective resilience in the face of various incidents, ranging from climate change to terrorism and major infrastructural disruptions.

The transnational nature of many societal security challenges requires regional cooperation. Regional cooperation is not only more effective than the efforts of a single state but also a necessary aspect of national preparedness. Cooperation in the Baltic Sea region has been evolving to include societal safety and security issues on the agenda of regional institutions, including the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). Among others, session topics will include climate change adaptation, nuclear security cooperation, strengthening resilience against extremism, gender-based violence and approaches to reduce urban violence.

By convening experts and practitioners from the region, the conference will provide a platform for constructive dialogue and innovative thinking. As a result, the conference will form a basis to further build on existing institutions and frameworks for collaboration to address the societal security challenges faced by Baltic Sea states.



High-level participants include:

- HE Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden
- HE Vladimir Titov, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Russia (TBC)
- HE Oleg Kravchenko, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Belarus
- HE Annika Söder, State Secretary for the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden
- HE Audun Halvorsen, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway
- HE Ulrik Vestergaard Knudsen, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark
- HE Bartosz Cichocki, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland
- Rainer Saks, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Estonia
- Helga Schmid, Secretary General, European External Action Service
- Dagfinn Høybråten, Secretary General, Nordic Council of Ministers
- Maira Mora, Director General of the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat
- Cecilia Daae, Director General, Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection
- Paola Albrito, Chief of Regional Office for Europe, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
- André Jol, Head of Group Climate Change Impacts, European Environment Agency
- Ambassador Jan Eliasson, Chair of the SIPRI Governing Board
- Bengt Sundelius, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency

Media are welcome to attend all sessions.

Contact SIPRI Communications Officer Alexandra Manolache to register for the event (professional media only) [alexandra.manolache@sipri.org](mailto:alexandra.manolache@sipri.org), +46 76 628 61 33.

**Contact**

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Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden's gift to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on their 100th anniversary: anniversary funds for increased exchange between our countries

Published 28 May 2018

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström today presented Sweden's gift in the form of three anniversary funds the Government intends to set up for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on the occasion of their 100th anniversaries this year. The gift was announced at Skansen in connection with a four-party meeting between the Swedish and Baltic foreign ministers.

The funds are intended to promote a broad exchange between the people of Sweden and those of our neighbouring countries Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, with a special focus on promoting relations between young people. The Government intends to set aside SEK 30 million (SEK 10 million for each country) as a basic contribution to the funds. The Government will also invite businesses, organisations and private individuals in Sweden and the Baltics to help ensure the funds grow, with the aim of creating lasting and dynamic relations in society, the economy and culture.

An interim committee led by former Minister for Finance Pär Nuder will oversee the process of setting up the funds.

On Saturday 26 May, Skansen was the venue of the XIV Baltic Day, which brought together over 500 participants from Swedish-Baltic diaspora groups

for a cultural day of song, dance, music, food and crafts to celebrate the 100th anniversaries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The foreign ministers of Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania took part.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Conflict prevention measures and Sweden's mediation role in focus at peace conference in Stockholm

Published 04 May 2018

'The Politics of Peace' will be the theme when the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) host the fifth annual Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development on 7–9 May. The Forum will gather a number of international experts for discussion and debate on how global cooperation on conflict prevention and sustainable peace can be strengthened. The speakers include Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

Although the number of armed conflicts has fallen in the last five years, the need for conflict prevention measures and mediation is greater than ever. The capacity to identify and stop potential conflicts at an early stage around the world through international cooperation is becoming more and more important, not least in a time when conflicts originate in increasingly complex environments.

"Inclusive discussion and debate on how different policy areas, countries and actors can contribute to conflict resolution are vital if we are to achieve sustainable peaceful solutions. It is clear that the work done by Sweden as a member of the United Nations Security Council and our experience gained

there will be important in conversations during the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development," says Ms Wallström.

Both Ms Wallström and Ms Lövin will participate in the Forum and give opening speeches. The ambition with the theme of this year's Forum, 'Politics of Peace', is to strengthen international cooperation on conflict prevention and sustainable peace.

"In recent years, we have seen a worrying rise in violent conflicts. If we are to succeed in reversing this trend, we must increase our capacity to prevent violence through cross-border and long-term cooperation. We cannot continue to 'put out fires'," says Ms Lövin.

Other high-level participants at the Forum will include President of the United Nations General Assembly Miroslav Lajčák, SIPRI Chair and former Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Jan Eliasson and ministers from Afghanistan, Liberia and Somalia. In addition to these, the Forum will be attended by 250 international participants from a number of partner countries.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality to bring together top names from more than 100 countries

Published 28 March 2018

Award-winning author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner and human rights counsellor Colin Gonsalves are some of the 500 gender equality actors who will participate in the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality on 15–17 April. The global forum is about strengthening women's and girls' rights, representation and access to resources.

The Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality will bring together just over 500 participants from more than 100 countries, from grassroots to ministerial level. They include politicians and representatives of academia, the business world and civil society. Representatives of international organisations will also participate, including the heads of several UN bodies, commissioners from the European Union and African Union, and the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. The purpose of the forum is to mobilise the work on global gender equality through alliance-building and exchange of methods and results.

The Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality is being organised by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Swedish Institute, in collaboration with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA). Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot

Wallström, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin, Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde and Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Lena Hallengren will represent the Swedish Government. The ministers will share their experiences of working on the Government's feminist foreign policy.

The programme has been developed in cooperation with a number of Swedish and international gender equality actors and covers a wide range of topics. These include methods to increase the participation of women and girls in peace processes, the importance of gender equality for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, how we are to ensure the right of women and girls to decide over their own bodies, and how various actors can pave the way for women's economic empowerment. The participants will also hear witness accounts from Colombia about the work on what is sometimes called the world's most gender equal peace agreement, and be able to hold interactive discussions about threats and hatred against women on the internet.

The full programme and detailed press and accreditation information is available at [www.genderequalworld.com](http://www.genderequalworld.com).

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Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# UN Secretary-General and Security Council to meet in Sweden

Published 22 March 2018

In April, UN Secretary-General António Guterres will hold his annual informal working meeting with the UN Security Council in Sweden. The meeting will be held at Dag Hammarskjöld's farm Backåkra in Skåne. This will be the first time the annual working meeting takes place outside the United States. The meeting will focus on the future of the UN's peace support work – how the UN's peace-keeping missions can be strengthened and made more effective.

"The meeting will be held at Backåkra and in the spirit of Dag Hammarskjöld's legacy. It is great news that the meeting can take place in Sweden, not least in light of our long tradition of working for conflict prevention and peaceful solutions to conflicts," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

The Secretary-General will pay a longer visit to Sweden and will also have talks with the Prime Minister, as well as giving the Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture, which is arranged by Uppsala University and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation.

Further details about the date, programme and press information will be published closer to the time of the visit. A press briefing about the meeting will be held on 18 April.



## Q&A on the Secretary-General's visit to Sweden

### Background

Dag Hammarskjöld's farm Backåkra will be reinaugurated on 28 March. Backåkra has been renovated so as to function as a meeting place on topics that were close to Dag Hammarskjöld's heart, such as international cooperation, peace research, the environment and human rights.

As UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld took the initiative to form the first UN peace-keeping mission with armed troops. Peace-keeping missions remain one of the UN's most powerful instruments and will be the main theme of the working meeting.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Fryshuset Foundation CEO Johan Oljeqvist to host the Child Forum on Children and Armed Conflict

Published 16 March 2018 Updated 16 March 2018

On Thursday 22 March, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Fryshuset Foundation will hold a Child Forum, focusing on children and armed conflict. The Child Forum is part of a series of child consultations hosted in a number of countries.

During its time in the United Nations Security Council, Sweden has chosen 'children and armed conflict' as one of its focus areas. As chair of the UN Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, Sweden has consistently highlighted the vulnerable situation of children in armed conflict based on four Swedish priorities: implementing the children and armed conflict agenda, children's right to have their voices heard, children's right to education and children's right to health.

"We cannot afford more lost generations of children deprived of their right to life, to education, who are orphaned, injured and traumatised. If we protect children today, we can prevent conflicts tomorrow," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström in a comment ahead of the event.

For more than a month, 60 children in Sweden have been working on issues concerning children's protection, children's rights and conflict prevention. Based on this work, the children have drafted recommendations to be

presented to Ms Wallström during the Child Forum on 22 March.

Ms Virginia Gamba, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, and Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, founder of the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative, will also take part in the Child Forum.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# North Korea's Minister for Foreign Affairs Ri Yong-Ho will visit Sweden on 15–16 March

Published 15 March 2018

North Korea's Minister for Foreign Affairs Ri Yong-Ho will visit Sweden on 15–16 March for talks with Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. The talks will focus on Sweden's consular responsibilities as a protecting power for the United States, Canada and Australia. They will also address the security situation on the Korean Peninsula, which is high on the Security Council agenda. Sweden is a non-permanent member of the Security Council in 2017–2018.

The UN Security Council has unanimously condemned North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programmes and demanded the complete, verifiable and irrevocable elimination of these programmes. The Security Council has also emphasised the need for intensified diplomatic efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. Sweden fully supports the Security Council resolutions. The aim of the visit is to contribute to the effective implementation of the resolutions.

A press release summarising the talks will be published when the talks are concluded, in the evening of 16 March.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Billions can be saved by preventing violent conflicts, says Swedish-financed study by the UN and the World Bank

Published 13 March 2018

Violent conflicts throughout the world cause enormous human suffering, and they also have a major economic impact. A new study by the UN and the World Bank – Pathways for Peace – shows that violent conflicts cause a drop in global GDP of 13.3 per cent per year. According to the study, investments in conflict prevention measures can mean savings of between USD 5 billion and 70 billion per year.

"The study clearly shows the importance of conflict prevention measures. At the same time, it highlights the need for a combination of diplomacy, mediation, development cooperation and security-building measures to prevent violent conflicts from breaking out. These are also the conclusions we can draw from our work as a member of the UN Security Council," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

Pathways for Peace, which will be launched in Stockholm on Wednesday, is the first joint study the UN and the World Bank have conducted on conflict prevention. The two authors – Alexandre Marc from the World Bank and Jago Salmon from the UN – identify several causes of the large number of violent conflicts throughout the world. The main causes mentioned include denying people the opportunity to influence developments in their community, and people's right to natural resources, security and justice.

"The UN's and the World Bank's conclusions are consistent with the strategy for sustainable peace that the Swedish Government adopted last year. Successful conflict prevention work can free up resources for poverty reduction and improved welfare in vulnerable parts of the world. Multilateral bodies such as the UN and the World Bank play a key role in this work," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The launch of Pathways for Peace will take place on Wednesday 14 March at 15.30–17.00 at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs International Press Centre. The authors Alexandre Marc and Jago Salmon will attend the launch, along with State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Annika Söder and State Secretary Ulrika Modéer.

Journalists interested in attending the launch should register by emailing [lina.eidmark@gov.se](mailto:lina.eidmark@gov.se) by 12.00 on Wednesday 14 March.

The Pathways for Peace study can be downloaded at [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org).



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström's telephone call with United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres

Published 09 March 2018

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström spoke on the telephone today to UN Secretary-General António Guterres about the upcoming ministerial meeting on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), which was convened at the initiative of Sweden and Jordan. Ms Wallström stressed that the purpose of the meeting, to be held in Rome on 15 March, is to mobilise political and financial support for UNRWA, which is currently facing an acute budget deficit of USD 446 million.

UNRWA assists more than five million Palestinian refugees, one third of whom still live in refugee camps, and plays an important stabilising role in an already troubled region.

Ms Wallström thanked the Secretary-General for his strong commitment to UNRWA and his leading role in improving its financing.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Media invitation: #WikiGap at KTH Royal Institute of Technology

Published 05 March 2018

You are invited to attend a press conference with Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström in connection with #WikiGap.

**Tid:** 8 mars 2018 at 14:00 to 15:00

**Plats:** The KTH library, Osquars backe 31

On 8 March, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Wikimedia will take joint global action to help make the internet more gender-equal. Edit-a-thons aimed at increasing the number of women on Wikipedia will be organised in parallel in almost 50 countries. Ms Wallström will host #WikiGapSthlm at KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

## Programme

14.00–14.30 Introduction by

- Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs
- Anna Wahl, Vice Rector of KTH Royal Institute of Technology
- Sara Mörtzell and John Andersson, Wikimedia Sverige

14.30–18.00 Edit-a-thon

18.00 Conclusion and mingling, with light refreshments

Ms Wallström is available for interviews between 14.30 and 15.00.



More information on the #WikiGap initiative can be found at [www.swemfa.se/wikigap](http://www.swemfa.se/wikigap)

**Registration:** No later than 16.00 on Thursday 7 March, by email to [ud.pressjour@gov.se](mailto:ud.pressjour@gov.se)



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden, Jordan and Egypt to hold an extraordinary ministerial meeting to mobilise support for Palestine refugees

Published 03 March 2018 Updated 03 March 2018

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is facing the most difficult financial situation since its inception in 1949. Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs and the co-chairing Foreign Ministers of Jordan and Egypt are therefore convening an extraordinary ministerial conference in Rome on 15 March to mobilise both political and financial support for the Agency, and to find ways to assure sustainable forms of financing for UNRWA.

"Sweden has a long history of close cooperation with UNRWA. In 2017, we were the Agency's fourth largest donor," says Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

Today, UNRWA provides humanitarian aid for 5.3 million refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine. The Agency provides basic education for more than half a million refugee children, primary health care for 3.5 million refugees, cash and food support for the abject poor and special programmes for vulnerable women.

"UNRWA carries out important humanitarian work and has a stabilising effect on a region severely affected by conflict and extremism," underscores

Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

UNRWA has faced recurring budget shortfalls in recent years, while at the same time the occupation, the situation in Gaza and the war in Syria have led to deteriorating conditions for Palestine refugees in the region. The financial support from the international community has not increased at the same rate as the humanitarian needs of Palestine refugees. The Agency is now facing a budget shortfall of USD 446 million. Sweden and its co-chairs are therefore convening this extraordinary ministerial conference to secure the financial means that UNRWA needs to fulfil its important mandate, pending a peaceful and just solution to the Middle East conflict.

## Background

The ministerial conference will be held on 15 March at the premises of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations in Rome. Invitations have been sent to around 90 countries, including some Member States of the League of Arab States and the European Union Member States. The US has also indicated that it will be represented.

UNRWA was established by the UN General Assembly in 1949, after many Palestinians fled or were expelled from their homes amidst the unrest following the establishment of the State of Israel. The Agency was mandated with providing humanitarian aid to Palestine refugees pending a just and peaceful solution to the conflict. Today, UNRWA supports more than 5 million refugees, one third of whom still live in refugee camps.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden to increase gender equality on the internet through #WikiGap

Published 14 February 2018

On 8 March, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Wikimedia will take joint global action to help make the internet more gender equal. Edit-a-thons aimed at increasing the number of women on Wikipedia will be organised in parallel in some 50 countries. Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will host #WikiGapSthlm at KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

Wikipedia is the world's largest online and user-generated encyclopaedia. Its content influences and colours users' knowledge about the world. But there is great imbalance on the website. Ninety per cent of the content is created by men, and there are four times more articles about men than there are about women.

To contribute to a more accurate picture, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Wikimedia have taken the initiative for the #WikiGap event. On 8 March – International Women's Day – parallel events will be organised in more than 50 countries, from Sweden to Indonesia, Egypt and Colombia, together with local actors and partners.

"Sweden is the first country in the world with a feminist foreign policy. It emanates from a moral conviction based on justice and human rights, and because gender equality is also a basic condition for peace, security and sustainable development," says Margot Wallström.

Sweden's feminist foreign policy is based on the ambition to strengthen

women's and girls' rights, representation and resources. The #WikiGap initiative is part of this policy and aims to improve the representation of women on Wikipedia. During the day-long event, the invited participants will write and edit articles on Wikipedia using information on women profiles, experts and role models in different fields.

In Stockholm, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is collaborating with Wikimedia Sverige and KTH Royal Institute of Technology. The theme is women in technology and science.

The Ministry and Sweden's embassies will co-host #WikiGap with Wikimedia. WikiGap aims to provide a platform for volunteers who want to contribute to a more gender-equal internet. The theme was determined by the organisers, but the texts produced will be the work of the participants themselves. During the event, the articles will not be written or edited by the missions abroad or the Ministry; instead, this will be done by the those taking part in the edit-a-thons.

See a list of all events here: [www.swemfa.se/wikigap](http://www.swemfa.se/wikigap)



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden to host global gender equality conference 15–17 April

Published 14 February 2018

Leaders from all over the world will gather in Stockholm to intensify international efforts for gender equality. The Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality brings together close to 500 key representatives from civil society organisations, governments, business, and academia. The aim is to find solutions, take new initiatives, and strengthen co-operation in the international fight for gender equality.

Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms Margot Wallström, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, Ms Isabella Lövin, and Minister for EU Affairs and Trade, Ms Ann Linde, as well as the Director-General of the Swedish Institute, Ms Annika Rembe, will host the forum, which is organised by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Swedish Institute.

The conference is taking place at a decisive moment. Despite some progress, inequality and discrimination of girls and women remains one of the greatest human rights challenges in our time. The forum mobilises forces to achieve the global goals under Agenda 2030 and will focus on critical issues related to women's and girls' rights, representation, and access to resources.

"More rights, representation, and resources for women and girls means more peace, security, and prosperity for the world. A feminist foreign policy is the way forward. With this conference, we create a possibility for grassroots and high-level participants from all over the globe to meet, share knowledge, and inspire political leaders," says Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign

## Affairs

"When we empower women and girls we empower nations and eradicate poverty. It starts with giving every woman and girl the right over her own body," says Isabella Lövin, Minister International Development Cooperation and Climate.

"Gender equality contributes to growth in all countries, regardless of the level of development. This has to guide all economic policy-making, including trade," says Minister for EU Affairs and Trade, Ms Ann Linde.

"We see successes but also movements that seek to limit women's and girls' rights and range. That's why the forum is so important. We need to gather forces, share experiences, and disseminate breakthroughs that make a difference for the individual as well as for society at large," says Annika Rembe, Director-General of the Swedish Institute.

Approximately 500 participants are expected from around the world. During the forum, participants will identify the biggest challenges, as well as possible solutions, for the fight for gender equality today. They will share experiences and good examples as well as build networks. Results as well as new initiatives will be brought into local contexts.

**Date:** 15–17 April

**Location:** Stockholm City Conference Centre, Stockholm, Sweden

For further information and media accreditation, please visit:

[genderequalworld.com](http://genderequalworld.com)

#GenderEqualWorld

#StockholmGenderForum

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Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Defence, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# The Government of Sweden tasks the Armed Forces to support the United Nations with gender competence

Published 25 January 2018

On 25 January the Swedish government decided to task the Armed Forces to support the United Nations with gender competence. Sweden is responding to a sought after need within the UN and will thereby continue to be an active partner for gender equality and its development within the UN system.

Sweden will support the UN with gender competence by offering training opportunities at the centre for implementation of gender perspectives in military operations - the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations, NCGM. Since 22 February 2013, this centre of Nordic defence cooperation has been tasked with leading the gender area within NATO.

NCGM was established five years ago in part responding to Security Council resolution 1325. Adopted 17 years ago, the resolution aims at including women to a much greater extent in the work for peace and security and to take into consideration the perspectives of both men and women in this work.

Sweden is a strong advocate and has been working hard for increased implementation, understanding, education and competence in the gender field. This is in line with the government's feminist foreign policy and Sweden's work on the already existing Security Council agenda for women, peace and security.



- Gender in military operations is a priority for Sweden. We have unique skills in which NCGM has developed the only certified Gender Advisor course that exists for military personnel. Increased skills in and understanding of gender issues also increases the operational effects of a military operation, says Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

- Sweden is actively working on the issue of women, peace and security in the EU, the UN and in our cooperation with other countries and organisations, such as NATO. Knowledge and education are important and we contribute to this through the NCGM, says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs to take part in UN Security Council meeting on North Korea

Published 13 December 2017

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will be in New York on 15–16 December to take part in a ministerial meeting of the Security Council on North Korea. UN Secretary-General António Guterres and foreign ministers from a number of Security Council members will be participating. Ms Wallström will also attend an informal meeting of the Security Council on the link between climate change and security.

In addition, Ms Wallström will be taking part in several bilateral meetings with visiting ministers and talks with UN representatives. She will also meet with representatives of organisations working in feminist foreign policy areas.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström to visit Bangladesh, Myanmar and Vietnam on 19–23 November

Published 14 November 2017

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will begin her journey by visiting refugee camps in Bangladesh, to which more than 620 000 Rohingya have fled from violence and abuse in Myanmar since August. In addition to refugees, Ms Wallström will meet representatives of the Government of Bangladesh, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organisation for Migration and the International Committee of the Red Cross. The visit is being made together with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini and Germany's Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Sigmar Gabriel.

"There is a serious humanitarian situation in the camps near Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. Reports show how Rohingya have fled from horrendous abuse and sexual and gender-based violence. By visiting the camps and speaking to representatives who are dealing with the situation there, I can form an opinion regarding the needs, and bring my impressions to the talks I will have with regional representatives and ahead of further international efforts concerning this very difficult situation," says Ms Wallström.

Peace, sustainable development and increased cooperation between Europe and Asia are among the issues on the agenda when Ms Wallström then meets

with her European and Asian counterparts in Myanmar's capital, Naypyidaw, for an Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). This gathering of 51 European and Asian countries meets every second year at foreign minister level.

"The ASEM Summit is an opportunity to conduct a dialogue with my Asian counterparts on important global challenges, such as the participation of women in conflict prevention. It is also a good opportunity to discuss current issues in the region, in particular the situation in Rakhine State in Myanmar, but also other current issues such as North Korea, troubling political developments in Cambodia and tensions in the South China Sea," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

The trip will conclude with a visit to Hanoi, Vietnam, for political discussions and meetings with civil society.

"Sweden and Vietnam enjoy long-standing bilateral relations. It is important that we have a political dialogue with government representatives of Vietnam concerning issues of mutual interest, as well as human rights. I will also meet young Vietnamese and civil society actors," says Ms Wallström.



Press release from Ministry of Defence, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# EU's ministers for defence and foreign affairs discussed permanent structured cooperation

Published 14 November 2017

On 13 November, EU's ministers for foreign affairs and defence met at the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) in Brussels. At the meeting, Sweden was represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallström, and the Minister for Defence, Peter Hultqvist.

In conjunction with the meeting, Sweden and the other EU countries that intend to participate in EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (Pesco) signed a joint declaration of intent to the Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The government will soon submit a proposition to gain Riksdag's approval for Sweden to join the cooperation.

The cooperation is to develop the EU's operational capacity for military crisis management tasks, which can also be at the disposal of UN missions, for example. Pesco offers a framework for cooperation on the development of military capabilities but also the potential for tangible security and defence policy projects.

The Permanent Structured Cooperation is a phase in the implementation of EU's global strategy, for which Sweden has been a driving force and places major emphasis. The Union's collective capability to prevent conflicts and manage external crises with various instruments is to increase within the framework of the follow-up.

The government believes that Pesco will fulfil two strategic objectives: to

strengthen the joint security and defence policy and to contribute to strengthening European solidarity. The Swedish participation will enable Sweden to better influence EU's joint foreign, security and defence policy. The cooperation is inter-governmental and fully in line with Sweden's military policy of non-alignment.

At the Council meeting, the ministers of foreign affairs held a separate discussion on the relationship between the EU and Africa, and how the Union's strategic communication is to be strengthened.

In a separate session, EU's ministers for defence also discussed the cooperation that exists between the EU and Nato in order to strengthen European security and international crisis management capability. In conjunction with the meeting, the European Defence Agency (EDA) held a board meeting in a Defence Ministers format.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Prime Minister Stefan Löfven presented the Swedish programme for the 2018 Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers

Published 01 November 2017

The 69th Session of the Nordic Council is taking place in Helsinki between 31 October and 2 November. Sweden is represented by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Nordic Cooperation Margot Wallström, Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog and Minister for Culture and Democracy Alice Bah Kuhnke.

At the opening of the Nordic Council's session in Helsinki on 31 October, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven presented the priorities of the 2018 Swedish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Sweden's Presidency programme, entitled 'An inclusive, innovative and secure Nordic region' is based on three themes.

The first theme, 'An inclusive Nordic region', focuses on the Nordic social model whose hallmarks are trust, equality, gender equality and openness. The starting point is a number of challenges that the Nordic countries share in these areas.

The second theme, 'A sustainable and innovative Nordic region', focuses on Nordic innovation as a driving force for sustainable social transformation. Engagement in environmental issues is, and historically has been, strong in

the Nordic countries, but considerable efforts are needed if we are to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda both in the Nordic region and globally.

The third theme is 'A secure and open Nordic region'. Here, the focus is on cooperation on broad security issues, with security and openness as the watchwords.

In 2018, Sweden will also lead the work of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and coordinate informal Nordic and Nordic-Baltic foreign and security policy cooperation (N5 and NB8). The ambition is to find points of contact between these forms of cooperation and all countries in the Baltic Sea region to strengthen regional cooperation horizontally.





Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Three years with a feminist foreign policy – The Ministry for Foreign Affairs presents collected examples of what the policy has achieved

Published 31 October 2017 Updated 31 October 2017

Sweden is the first country in the world to pursue a feminist foreign policy. The aim is to contribute to gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls.

The policy was introduced by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström in October 2014, and a follow-up conducted by the Swedish Foreign Service shows an intensive implementation process that in only three years has led to concrete results and progress.

The Ministry is now presenting collected examples of how the policy has been pursued and what it has accomplished, both internationally and at country level.

"When I took up the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs, the first thing I did was to announce that Sweden would pursue a feminist foreign policy. The journey has not always been smooth, but these collected examples truly show that the policy has succeeded in making a difference for women and girls around the world. This is more important than ever, given the negative trend we see in the area today," says Ms Wallström.

The feminist foreign policy is being pursued by the Swedish Foreign Service integrating a gender perspective in all its activities. The collected examples

give evidence of impact in all policy areas.

"I meet enormous interest in and curiosity about the concept of a 'feminist foreign policy' both at home and out in the world. Many people wonder what a feminist foreign policy involves and what it can achieve. This paper provides concrete examples of how the policy becomes reality, how different environments require different types of measures and initiatives, and how the Swedish Foreign Service is always finding new ways to reach out and make a difference. Sweden's voice is heard around the world."

UN Women recently awarded Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström a prize for her work with the feminist foreign policy.

Link: [Sweden's feminist foreign policy – examples from three years of implementation](#)



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Government ministers at the United Nations General Assembly

Published 15 September 2017

Next week, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will travel to the opening of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The Swedish priorities are sustainable development and inclusive growth, the fight against climate change and strengthening the UN's conflict prevention and peacekeeping efforts. The Swedish ministers are scheduled to meet representatives of countries on the Security Council agenda.

During the visit, Mr Löfven will participate in a meeting on peacekeeping missions in the Security Council and meet with a number of leaders and the Secretary-General to discuss current foreign and security policy issues. Mr Löfven will also participate in a climate summit and speak about the efforts for inclusive growth and the Global Deal initiative at the World Economic Forum's Sustainable Development Impact Summit. Mr Löfven will be in New York between 18 and 20 September.

Ms Lövin will participate in the Conference on the Global Pact for the Environment and co-host an event on climate financing with French Minister for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition Nicolas Hulot. Ms Lövin will also participate in a summit on the humanitarian situation in South Sudan and meet with UN Women and UNFPA to discuss how access to sexual and reproductive health and rights affects women's economic empowerment. Ms Lövin will be in New York between 19 and 20 September.

Ms Wallström will participate in high-level discussions on conflict prevention, children and armed conflict, women, peace and security, as well as meetings on Yemen, Syria and South Sudan. As Sweden is a member of the Security Council, Ms Wallström will also attend a number of meetings during the week on issues currently on the Security Council's agenda. Ms Wallström will be in New York between 17 and 23 September.

For more information and detailed programmes, please contact the relevant minister's press secretary.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Global treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons adopted

Published 07 July 2017

A global treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons was adopted today, as the negotiations at United Nations Headquarters in New York were concluded.

"This is a highly significant process that has now come to a successful conclusion; the first multilateral negotiation on nuclear weapons in more than 20 years," notes Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

"Efforts for a nuclear weapon-free world are more important than ever, and a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons is an important step along the way. As far as Sweden is concerned, it has been natural to take an active part. As expected, the negotiations have not been easy - it is in the nature of things when the views of more than one hundred countries have to be reconciled."

Other weapons of mass destruction – chemical weapons and biological weapons – are already banned under separate conventions. Nuclear weapons are not subject to any such ban, however.

"We live in an increasingly troubled world. Instead of disarmament we are seeing investments being made in modernising nuclear arsenals. We need to break this trend, including through a stronger global norm against nuclear weapons. A prohibition treaty can contribute to this," says Ms Wallström.

The treaty text will now be processed in the Government Offices before the Government takes a position on it. Ultimately, it is up to the Riksdag to decide whether Sweden will ratify the treaty.



Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Prime Minister to welcome Aung San Suu Kyi to Stockholm

Published 09 June 2017

On Monday 12 June, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will welcome Myanmar's State Counsellor, Aung San Suu Kyi, to Rosenbad. They will meet to discuss bilateral relations between Sweden and Myanmar.

During her two-day visit to Sweden, Ms Aung San Suu Kyi will have bilateral talks with Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin. She will also give a speech in the Riksdag at the invitation of Speaker of the Riksdag Urban Ahlin.

## Programme points

### **Monday 12 June**

Morning Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström receives Ms Aung San Suu Kyi at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Initial talks are followed by a working lunch. Photo opportunity on arrival.

Early afternoon Prime Minister Stefan Löfven receives Ms Aung San Suu Kyi at Rosenbad. Photo opportunity at the entrance to Rosenbad. Photo pool at the start of the meeting. Joint press conference.

Late afternoon Meeting with Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, followed by a meeting with Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin.

## **Tuesday 13 June**

Morning Ms Aung San Suu Kyi gives a speech in the Riksdag. Photo opportunity on arrival. Media representatives with Riksdag accreditation have the opportunity to be present during the speech.

### **Advance registration**

Media representatives must register and/or apply for a place in the photo pool. Please register/apply via the International Press Centre at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs no later than 15.00 on Sunday 11 June. More detailed information about times and venues will be sent to media representatives concerned.

Advance registration/application for place in photo pool



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Wallström and Lövin open SIPRI Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development

Published 03 May 2017

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) are co-hosting the fourth annual Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development on 3–4 May.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin are delivering the Forum's opening address, together with other ministers from countries including Somalia and Liberia.

"In this context, SIPRI helps to bring together various actors from around the world to exchange experiences and provide practical advice on how to strengthen conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts," says Ms Wallström. "It is very important, not least for our work on the UN Security Council, to learn about good practice from those working on the ground in countries affected by conflict."

"Development cooperation plays a key role for countries seeking peaceful conflict resolution. Our experience from the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding may be an inspiration for many countries, and for the multilateral system," says Ms Lövin.

The Forum provides an opportunity for academics, politicians and civil society organisations to come together to discuss current research, develop policy and share good practice.

The theme of this year's Forum is 'Sustaining peace: what works?' The



Sustaining Peace Agenda and the 2030 Agenda reflect global consensus and joint commitments from the UN at policy level. The Forum aims to identify how these commitments can be carried out at country level.

Forum participants include Jan Eliasson and a number of ministers from various conflict and post-conflict countries, as well as experts from the World Bank, the EU and the UN system. Many civil society representatives and academics are also attending.

**For further information on SIPRI's Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development:**

Ms Stephanie Blenckner, Communications Director, SIPRI

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Email: [blenckner@sipri.org](mailto:blenckner@sipri.org)



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström to receive French foreign minister Jean-Marc Ayrault

Published 13 March 2017

On Monday 13 March, French Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development Jean-Marc Ayrault will visit Sweden for bilateral discussions with Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. The agenda will include a number of current issues linked to EU cooperation, our immediate region and the UN Security Council agenda, including Syria and the Middle East peace process.

## Invitation to press conference

Time: Monday 13 March at 13.45

Place: Bella Venezia, Rosenbad 1

Admittance via Kopparporten 13.00–13.40

The press conference will be webcast on [www.regeringen.se/](http://www.regeringen.se/)

Languages: English and French

Please bring your press credentials



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Invitation: #DigitalDiplomacy – the first public digital meeting between women foreign ministers

Published 07 March 2017

On International Women's Day on 8 March, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will gather women foreign ministers from different parts of the world for a video conference to discuss women, peace and security. The countries taking part are Colombia, Panama, Kenya and Liechtenstein. During the meeting, each minister will have the opportunity to share her experiences and priorities, and give her view of peacebuilding and gender equality in a foreign policy context.

The meeting will be broadcast live on the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' Facebook page and Twitter account, and on YouTube.

Date: 8 March

Time: 15.00–15.45 (GMT +1)

Links:

[SweMFA Facebook account](#)

[SweMFA Twitter account](#)

[SweMFA YouTube page](#)



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström met Sergei Lavrov in Moscow

Published 22 February 2017 Updated 22 February 2017

Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström had talks on 21 February with Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov in Moscow. Bilateral and regional affairs, European security, Ukraine and issues related to the United Nations Security Council were on the agenda.

"We had a straightforward, frank and constructive discussion, touching on both issues where we profoundly disagree and on areas where Sweden and Russia have a mutual interest in cooperation, such as in the regional organisations in our neighbourhood and issues on the UN Security Council agenda," says Ms Wallström.

Sweden and Russia are both members of the UN Security Council in 2017 and 2018. Ms Wallström today conveyed directly to her Russian counterpart Sweden's view of the situation in Syria, and emphasised the need for a ceasefire, humanitarian access and a political solution to the conflict. The two foreign ministers also discussed the wider situation in the Middle East, including the peace process.

Ms Wallström confirmed that Sweden's non-participation in military alliances remains in place, that Sweden determines its own security policy, and that Sweden considers it essential that international law and the principles of the European security order are respected.

"Sweden takes a serious view of the challenge to the European security order and the principles of international law posed by Russia's aggression towards Ukraine. I note that we are in agreement with Russia on the need for

full compliance with the Minsk agreements. I have reiterated that Sweden does not recognise Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol," says Ms Wallström.

With respect to bilateral relations, Ms Wallström emphasised the importance of people-to-people contacts, and stressed that cooperation between Swedish and Russian organisations should be facilitated. The foreign ministers also discussed violence against women and the situation of journalists and media freedom, including the need for the 2016 attack on Maria Persson Löfgren and other journalists to be fully investigated. Ms Wallström recalled that more than 350 Swedish companies operate in the Russian market, and that their investments have created tens of thousands of jobs. The two ministers also discussed regional cooperation in the Arctic, in the Barents region – with Sweden due to take over the Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council from Russia later this year – and in the Council of the Baltic Sea States.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Foreign minister discusses nuclear test ban

Published 10 February 2017 Updated 10 February 2017

On 13 February, Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO), will visit Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

Ms Wallström and Mr Zerbo will subsequently visit the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) in Kista for a tour and demonstration of detection technology for nuclear tests developed by the Agency.

A press conference will be held at the Agency in Kista on Monday at 12.30, followed by a special tour for interested journalists.

Please send advance notice of participation to Pezhman Fivrin (see contact information below).



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs to visit New York as Sweden assumes presidency of UN Security Council

Published 04 January 2017 Updated 04 January 2017

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will visit New York on 8–11 January in connection with Sweden's presidency and membership of the UN Security Council. During her visit, Ms Wallström will meet the new Secretary-General of the UN, António Guterres, and representatives of the other countries on the Security Council.

On 10 January, Sweden will host a ministerial-level open debate in the Security Council on conflict prevention. The debate will be the Secretary-General's first formal meeting with the Security Council. The aim is to give him and the Member States a basis for strengthening the UN's efforts to prevent the lapse and relapse into conflict. The debate will be led by Ms Wallström.

- Sweden in the UN Security Council
- Programme for Sweden's membership of the United Nations Security Council
- Opinion piece: Sweden takes its seat on the UN Security Council



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# UN Security Council adopts resolution on Israeli settlements

Published 23 December 2016 Updated 23 December 2016

On 23 December the UN Security Council adopted a resolution on the Middle East peace process. The Security Council notes that Israeli settlements on occupied land are illegal and represent a major obstacle to achieving a two-State solution.

The Government welcomes the Security Council's decision, which confirms the EU's and Sweden's view of the settlements.

The Security Council resolution, together with other international initiatives in the area – the French initiative, the recommendations of the Quartet (UN, EU, US and Russia), the Arab Peace Initiative – can help create the conditions for resuming a meaningful peace process. The resolution should be seen against the background of the rapidly deteriorating situation on the ground, with settlement expansion and demolitions, violence against civilians and a very worrying Israeli draft bill on the retroactive legalisation of 'outposts'.

"I welcome the Security Council's decision. It is very positive that the Council for the first time in eight years has agreed on a resolution on the peace process. The resolution provides important clarification under international law of the international community's view of the settlements and is a basis for Sweden's coming work on the Security Council. It can also help instil hope among young people in the region of a future two-State solution in which Israel and Palestine can live side by side in peace and security," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.





Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs to visit Palestine

Published 12 December 2016 Updated 12 December 2016

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will visit Palestine on 15–17 December for bilateral talks with President Mahmoud Abbas and Foreign Minister Riad Malki.

The talks will focus on how Sweden and Palestine can deepen their relations following Sweden's recognition of Palestine, the importance of democratic development, respect for human rights and gender equality, and what can be done to strengthen hopes of a two-state solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security.

During her visit, Ms Wallström will also meet representatives of civil society. The visit to Palestine is important for Sweden's efforts within the French initiative for the peace process in the Middle East.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Foreign Minister Margot Wallström inaugurates new Embassy in Tunisia

Published 24 October 2016 Updated 24 October 2016

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will visit Tunisia on 25–26 October for the official inauguration of Sweden's Embassy in Tunisia. During her visit Ms Wallström will meet with President Beji Caid Essebsi, Minister of Foreign Affairs Khemaies Jhinaoui, and representatives of civil society and Swedish businesses in Tunisia. The Embassy is also accredited for Libya and Ms Wallström will meet with Libyan representatives.

Swedish–Tunisian bilateral relations have been strengthened since the State Visit by Tunisia's President Beji Caid Essebsi to Sweden in November 2015 and the Swedish Government's subsequent decision to re-establish an embassy in Tunis. The first meeting of the Ministerial Forum, as envisaged in the Memorandum of Understanding signed during the State Visit, will take place during the visit and will include bilateral cooperation on political and trade matters. Ms Wallström will also voice Sweden's support for Tunisia's democratic consolidation in the face of the broad challenges that remain.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström to address UN General Assembly in New York

Published 16 September 2016 Updated 16 September 2016

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will visit New York from 18 to 23 September in connection with the opening of the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly. The theme of the general debate in the General Assembly this year is 'The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world'. Ms Wallström will deliver Sweden's address.

During her week in New York, Ms Wallström will attend a range of meetings and debates on topics including migration and refugees, peacebuilding, disarmament and gender-based violence in conflicts. She will also have preparatory talks ahead of Sweden's membership of the UN Security Council 2017–2018.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs to take part in informal OSCE ministerial meeting

Published 30 August 2016 Updated 30 August 2016

On 1 September, foreign ministers from the participating States of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) will gather for an informal ministerial meeting in Potsdam.

At the meeting, the ministers will discuss current security policy challenges in the OSCE region, and the preparations ahead of the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Hamburg in December. The meeting is being held at the invitation of Germany, which holds the 2016 chairmanship of the OSCE.

The OSCE is a security policy cooperation body with 57 participating States. All European States plus the United States, Canada and central Asian countries participate in the OSCE on equal terms.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström to welcome Baltic foreign ministers

Published 23 August 2016 Updated 23 August 2016

On 27 August it will be 25 years since Sweden re-established diplomatic relations with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania after the countries regained their independence. To celebrate this anniversary, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström has invited her three Baltic counterparts to Stockholm on 30 August for talks, followed by dinner.

**Tid:** 30 augusti 2016 at 15.00

**Plats:** Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Gustav Adolfs torg 1

A press conference will be held at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs following the meeting.

Press credentials are required.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden to open embassy in Lebanon

Published 14 July 2016 Updated 14 July 2016

The Government has today decided to open an embassy in Beirut, Lebanon. The embassy will be fully operational next year.

The embassy's activities will mainly involve political reporting and development cooperation, with a special focus on the Syria crisis and its repercussions in Lebanon. The opening of an embassy will strengthen relations with Lebanon and create better conditions for the implementation and follow-up of Sweden's five-year regional development cooperation strategy for the Syria crisis. The strategy encompasses SEK 1.7 billion until 2020. In addition, Sweden has contributed more than SEK 2.2 billion in humanitarian aid to the region since the outbreak of the conflict. There is currently an honorary consulate in Beirut.

"With an embassy in Lebanon we will have the opportunity to improve the prospects of an active role for Sweden in the region, with a focus on the Syria crisis. Lebanon and Sweden are affected by the Syria conflict in different ways, and it is therefore very good news that we can now strengthen our bilateral relations," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# State Visit to Germany

Published 22 June 2016 Updated 30 June 2016

King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia will pay a State Visit to Germany on 5–8 October 2016 at the invitation of Federal President Joachim Gauck. The Government will be represented by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg.

The State Visit is an opportunity to further strengthen the close political, cultural and economic ties between Sweden and Germany. Innovation, sustainability and openness are the main themes of the visit.

Germany is Sweden's most important trading partner, and a Swedish business delegation will accompany the State Visit, which will offer Swedish companies the opportunity to further build on already strong trade relations.

The four-day visit will take place in the cities of Berlin, Hamburg, Wittenberg and Leipzig.

Further information about the programme and participants will be published nearer the time of the visit.

## To editorial offices

Swedish media representatives need special accreditation from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to cover the State Visit. The deadline for accreditation applications is Friday 23 September 2016.

Accreditation application for State Visit to Germany

For German and international media representatives, accreditation will be

dealt with by the German Federal Press Office.





**Government Offices of Sweden**

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Employment, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Finance, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice

# Government reshuffle, 25 May 2016

Published 25 May 2016 Updated 01 June 2016

## Newly appointed ministers

Minister for the Environment (Ministry of the Environment and Energy):  
Karolina Skog (Green Party)

Minister for Housing and Digital Development (Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation): Peter Eriksson (Green Party)

Minister for EU Affairs and Trade (Ministry for Foreign Affairs): Ann Linde (Social Democratic Party)

## Changes by ministry

### Prime Minister's Office

- Minister for Policy Coordination and Energy Ibrahim Baylan will be responsible for policy coordination and energy issues.
- Minister for Strategic Development and Nordic Cooperation Kristina Persson leaves the Government.
- The Government will establish a Committee for Strategic Development under the Prime Minister's Office.

### Ministry of Employment

- Ylva Johansson's title is changed to Minister for Employment and

Integration.

## Ministry of Finance

- Minister for Public Administration Ardalan Shekarabi will be responsible for eGovernment.

## Ministry of Justice

- Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson will be responsible for arms export control issues.

## Ministry of the Environment and Energy

- Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog takes office as head of Ministry, with responsibility for environmental issues and urban environment agreements.

- Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson leaves the Government.

## Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

- Minister for Housing and Digital Development Peter Eriksson takes office, with responsibility for housing and digital development issues.

## Ministry for Foreign Affairs

- Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin will be responsible for international development cooperation and climate issues and is Deputy Prime Minister, but will not substitute for the Prime Minister.

- Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde takes office, with responsibility for EU affairs and trade issues.

- Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will be responsible for Nordic affairs.

## Press contacts for the Prime Minister and newly

## appointed ministers

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Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Wallström and Lövin to attend global summit in Istanbul

Published 23 May 2016 Updated 23 May 2016

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin will take part in the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) on 23 and 24 May. Some 150 countries will take part in the Summit, which is being held at the initiative of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Summit is taking place at a time in which there are more, and more extensive, humanitarian crises than the world has seen for some time. If all of the 125 million people around the globe in urgent need of humanitarian assistance were gathered in a single country, that country would be the eleventh largest in the world. At the same time, UN appeals are underfunded and there is inadequate respect for international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles.

At the Summit, Ms Wallström will lead a round-table discussion on the situation of women and girls in humanitarian crises. She will also take part in discussions on humanitarian financing. Ms Lövin will take part in discussions on political leadership and how war and conflict can be prevented. The ministers will also take part in a number of side events on topics including international humanitarian law, sexual and gender-based violence, and the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding.

Sweden has produced around 50 specific actions, encompassing all seven round-table subject areas, which will be presented at the Summit. Sweden's main priorities at the WHS are strengthening international humanitarian law, ensuring the influence of women and girls, promoting new forms of financing, and generating hope and a future for all women, men and children

trapped in protracted crises.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# The Government has appointed two special ambassadors – one Ambassador for Human Rights and one Ambassador for Disarmament

Published 23 May 2016 Updated 23 May 2016

To give greater focus to human rights and disarmament issues, the Government has today appointed two special ambassadors – one Ambassador for Human Rights and one Ambassador for Disarmament. Raising Sweden's profile in the area of human rights and democracy and Sweden's work on international disarmament is in line with the Government's foreign policy.

Annika Ben David has been appointed Ambassador for Human Rights. She is currently Sweden's Ambassador in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and has previously worked on human rights issues at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Ambassador for Human Rights is to represent Swedish policy in international organisations and in contacts with other countries. Ms Ben David will have a close dialogue with civil society organisations that are active in this area.

Eva Walder has been appointed Ambassador for Disarmament. She is currently Director-General for Trade Policy and has previously been Sweden's Ambassador in both Finland and Singapore. Ms Walder will represent Sweden in various multilateral and international negotiation

processes within the framework of the broad disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. As Ambassador she will also advance and develop Swedish disarmament policy in other international and national contexts.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström to take part in NATO foreign ministers meeting

Published 18 May 2016 Updated 18 May 2016

On 20 May, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will take part in the NATO foreign ministers meeting in Brussels for discussions on European security and the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan.

On 19–20 May, the NATO foreign ministers will come together for one of their regular meetings. As part of this meeting, talks will be held for the first time between partner countries Sweden and Finland, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and NATO. Issues related to European security will be raised, with a focus on cooperation between the EU and NATO, and developments in the Baltic Sea region. In addition, Ms Wallström will take part in the meeting on NATO's training and advisory mission in Afghanistan – the Resolute Support Mission – in the light of Sweden's contribution to this mission.





Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström to address UN General Assembly and Security Council

Published 09 May 2016 Updated 09 May 2016

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will visit New York on 10–12 May to speak at the high-level thematic debate in the General Assembly on peace and security, and to address the Security Council concerning terrorism.

During her visit, Ms Wallström will also host a meeting on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union to strengthen peace and security efforts. In addition, the Minister for Foreign Affairs will speak at a number of other meetings and debates on humanitarian financing, mediation and women's participation in peace processes, the election of a new Secretary-General, and other issues.

After the visit to New York, Ms Wallström will travel to Washington DC to take part in President Obama's US-Nordic Leaders Summit.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# New Swedish ambassador to combat trafficking in human beings

Published 04 May 2016 Updated 04 May 2016

The Government has decided to create a new position for an ambassador to combat trafficking in human beings. This decision will strengthen Sweden's international role as a leading human rights defender. Per-Anders Sunesson, currently head of department at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, will assume this new position on 16 May.

Through contact with other governments, the Swedish ambassador will be a driving force in efforts to combat trafficking in human beings, strengthen the EU's work and identify future partners.

"Sweden is a strong voice on the international stage for gender equality and human rights. Women and men must have the same power to shape society and their own lives. Creating a new position for an ambassador to combat human trafficking is a step in this direction," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

The ambassador will contribute to the achievement of Global Goal 16, target 2: "End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children".

"Through the ambassador's work, Sweden will help to ensure that the vulnerable situation of girls and women will be given particular attention in international efforts to combat human trafficking. The ambassador will also

have the important task of ensuring that our knowledge about human trafficking is continually updated so that the vulnerable receive the protection and support they need from the Swedish authorities," says Åsa Regnér, Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality.

## Sunesson has coordinated action against human trafficking

The new Ambassador, Per-Anders Sunesson, has a legal background and in recent years has held various positions at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, including head of social services, disability issues and child rights. Sunesson has also previously worked at the Ministry of Justice, where his area was the standing of victims in criminal proceedings, and at the National Board of Health and Welfare, where he was responsible for supervision of health and medical care, and social services.

Per-Anders Sunesson has also been the Government Offices coordinator for issues related to vulnerable EU citizens and human trafficking. Until today he has led the work on developing the Government's new action plan to combat human trafficking. Sunesson has extensive experience of collaboration with a wide range of parties and organisations.

## Human trafficking affects millions of people every year

Trafficking in human beings is one of the most serious forms of organised crime and a modern form of slavery. It is estimated that more than two million people are trafficked into slavery each year. Almost four fifths of the victims – mostly women and underage girls – are sold into the sex industry. Between 2012 and 2015, several hundred unaccompanied children who came to Sweden may have been victims of trafficking, according to data from the Stockholm County Administrative Board, which is responsible for coordinating national efforts.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden supports project to involve more women in peace processes

Published 31 March 2016 Updated 31 March 2016

When peace processes also include women, the resulting peace is more sustainable. Sweden is now entering a partnership with Georgetown University's Institute for Women, Peace and Security in Washington DC, by financially supporting a project that will study women's roles in peace processes in Ukraine and Myanmar. The cooperation will be announced today by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström when she visits the Institute.

Support to the Institute for Women, Peace and Security's project amounts to SEK 1 million. Ms Wallström will also meet students and researchers at the university and deliver a speech about the connection between security and development, and women's participation in social processes.

Ms Wallström will continue her visit in Washington DC by taking part in the Nuclear Security Summit, which will continue until 1 April.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs to take part in Nuclear Security Summit in Washington

Published 29 March 2016 Updated 29 March 2016

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will lead the Swedish delegation to the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS), which will take place on 31 March–1 April in Washington DC. President Obama will host the meeting, which will gather political leaders from 52 countries. The aim is to strengthen international cooperation to secure and protect nuclear material and nuclear installations and prevent nuclear terrorism.

"The idea of terrorists getting their hands on sensitive materials that can be used for nuclear weapons or dirty bombs is horrifying. Such a scenario must of course be prevented and deterred, and this is best done in cooperation with others," says Ms Wallström.

The past week's tragic events in Brussels show how important this summit is. Belgian police suspect that the terrorists behind the attacks at the airport and underground station also had plans to attack one of the country's two nuclear power plants and have increased security around them.

The NSS process, which began with President Obama's key policy speech in Prague in 2009 on disarmament and non-proliferation, has meant that important issues concerning nuclear security have been highlighted at the highest political level and measures have been taken regarding legislation and other practical steps.

In February 2016, Sweden hosted the final preparatory meeting ahead of the coming summit and a number of plans for negotiation were concluded.

Ms Wallström will arrive in Washington DC on 30 March, partly for bilateral talks with representatives of the US administration.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs to Berlin

Published 11 February 2016 Updated 11 February 2016

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will meet Germany's Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier in Berlin on 17 February.

Ms Wallström will discuss issues including the bilateral relations between Sweden and Germany, migration, the situation in Russia and Ukraine, and the situation in the Middle East.

A press conference will be held in connection with the meeting at the Federal Foreign Office media centre at 17.00.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström to participate in African Union summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 27–28 January

Published 26 January 2016 Updated 26 January 2016

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström is visiting Addis Ababa on 27–28 January to take part in the foreign ministers' session of the African Union summit, in which heads of state and foreign ministers from 53 countries will participate.

The theme of this year's summit is 'the Africa Year of Human Rights, in particular, with focus on the Rights of Women'.

In connection with the foreign ministers' meeting, Ms Wallström will hold bilateral talks with the leaders of several countries. During her trip, Ms Wallström will have an opportunity to discuss security policy developments in Europe and Africa, migration, gender equality and human rights, and the multilateral system in a changing world.

More information about the summit can be found on the African Union website.





Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Examen de la politique suédoise au Sahara occidental

Published 15 January 2016 Updated 15 January 2016

Le ministère des Affaires étrangères a reçu aujourd'hui le rapport de l'examen de la politique suédoise concernant le Sahara occidental effectué par l'ambassadeur Fredrik Florén. Ce rapport fait un certain nombre de recommandations, notamment le soutien au processus engagé sous l'égide de l'ONU pour lequel le Secrétaire général a annoncé de nouvelles initiatives, et constate qu'au regard du droit international, les exigences pour la reconnaissance du Sahara occidental / de la République Arabe Sahraouie Démocratique ne sont pas remplies.

- La question du Sahara occidental relève pour l'ONU d'un processus de décolonisation et est à l'ordre du jour du Conseil de sécurité, a déclaré le ministre des Affaires étrangères, Margot Wallström. Le gouvernement soutient les efforts de l'ONU pour trouver une solution négociée juste et mutuellement acceptable qui satisfasse le droit des Sahraouis à l'autodétermination. Nous nous félicitons de voir le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies prendre maintenant de nouvelles initiatives dans le but de trouver une solution au conflit et nous apportons notre soutien le plus entier au travail effectué par l'envoyé spécial de l'ONU pour le Sahara occidental, Christopher Ross.

- Le gouvernement va maintenant intensifier son soutien au processus engagé par l'ONU pour trouver une solution au conflit qui soit juste et mutuellement acceptable, a ajouté Margot Wallström.

Pour soutenir ce processus, plusieurs initiatives visant à accroître l'engagement de la Suède sur la question du Sahara occidental sont envisagées, comme par exemple:

- un renforcement, dans le cadre de l'ONU, du travail effectué pour faciliter une solution négociée.
- la poursuite de notre engagement pour le respect du droit international.
- une aide humanitaire accrue.
- un engagement pour établir des contacts de haut niveau avec les parties.
- un engagement pour promouvoir le dialogue entre les parties.

- Nous voulons consacrer toute notre énergie au soutien du processus de l'ONU qui semble maintenant avoir un nouveau souffle, a déclaré Margot Wallström. Ce processus ne tirerait aucun bénéfice d'une reconnaissance. La situation au Sahara occidental diffère en outre de celle qui prévalait dans les états que la Suède a auparavant reconnus. Le gouvernement n'a donc pas l'intention de reconnaître le Sahara occidental et adhère, en conséquence, à l'appréciation de la question faite par les précédents gouvernements.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Review of Western Sahara policy

Published 15 January 2016 Updated 15 January 2016

Today, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs received the review of Western Sahara policy conducted by Ambassador Fredrik Florén. The review provides a number of recommendations, including that support should be given to the UN process for which the Secretary-General has announced new initiatives; the review also notes that the criteria required by international law for recognising the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic/Western Sahara are not met.

"The matter of Western Sahara is a decolonisation issue at the UN and is on the Security Council agenda," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. "The Government supports the UN's efforts aimed at finding a fair, mutually acceptable, negotiated solution where the right of the Western Saharan people to self-determination is satisfied. We welcome that the UN Secretary-General is now taking new initiatives to find a solution to the conflict and fully support efforts by Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Christopher Ross," she continues.

"The Government will now intensify support to the UN process to find a fair, mutually accepted solution to the conflict," adds Ms Wallström.

In support of this process, several initiatives are being considered to increase Swedish involvement in the Western Sahara issue in the future, such as:

- strengthened UN efforts to facilitate a negotiated solution;
- continued commitment to compliance with international law;
- increased humanitarian aid;
- commitment to high-level contacts with the parties; and

- commitment to promote dialogue between the parties.

"There will be full focus on supporting the UN process that may now gain new initiatives," says Ms Wallström. "Recognition would not benefit this process. Furthermore, the situation in Western Sahara differs from that of states which Sweden has recognised in the past. Therefore, the Government does not intend to recognise Western Sahara and concurs with previous governments' assessments in the matter."



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Government re-establishes an international law and disarmament delegation

Published 18 December 2015 Updated 18 December 2015

On Thursday 17 December, the Government decided to establish an international law and disarmament delegation, tasked with following and analysing developments in the areas of humanitarian law and disarmament.

The purpose of the delegation will be to develop proposals for Swedish positions and initiatives on issues concerning humanitarian law and disarmament, including when these encompass or touch upon other areas of international law, such as human rights.

Re-establishment of the delegation is in line with the Government's declaration that human rights, international law, international disarmament and work to combat terrorism and weapons of mass destruction must be cornerstones of Swedish foreign policy.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs will chair the delegation. It is expected to meet two to three times a year. Between meetings, work will be conducted in working groups that will provide analyses and serve as think-tanks. The next step will be to appoint the delegation's members, who are to be experts in international law and disarmament issues, from the Riksdag, the Government Offices, government agencies, civil society and the research community.



Press release from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Government decides to open new embassies

Published 11 December 2015 Updated 11 December 2015

The Government has decided to open embassies in Lima, Manila and Tunis. The new missions abroad will be inaugurated in 2016.

The main focus of the new embassies will be to strengthen trade and investment promotion and the political dialogue.

"We see these embassies as a way to also create jobs in Sweden. It is important to improve opportunities in these markets which are somewhat farther away and somewhat harder to enter. In this, the embassies play a very important role," says Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg.

The Government announced its intention to open an embassy in Tunis in connection with the State Visit by the Tunisian President back in November. The formal decision has now been taken by the Government.

"This signals that we want to take part in consolidating peaceful developments in the country and an inclusive democratic process," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

## Tunis

Tunisia is the country where the Arab Spring began in 2010. The country's president recently conducted a State Visit to Sweden. Swedish companies have long experience of the Tunisian market. Exports are worth some SEK 750 million per year, with considerable potential to grow when Tunisia's economy becomes more stable. The aim of establishing an embassy in Tunis

is to strengthen promotion, and in particular trade promotion, and to further develop the political dialogue and follow-up of efforts for human rights and democratic development.

## Lima

With 30 million inhabitants, Peru is the fourth largest country in South America in terms of population. Its economic growth is among the highest in the region. At the same time, substantial investments are needed in infrastructure, education and welfare services. The positive economic and political developments in recent years have led to increased interest in trade and investment in the Peruvian market. Last year, Swedish exports to Peru amounted to just over SEK 1.3 billion. Initially, the promotion activities in Peru will mainly focus on sectors such as infrastructure, health and medical care, mining and corporate social responsibility (CSR). The embassy's tasks will also include political monitoring.

## Manila

The Philippines has a population of more than 100 million and is one of the fastest growing economies in Asia. Swedish exports to the Philippines amount to nearly SEK 1 billion. Almost 22 000 Swedes visited the country last year and this number is expected to increase as the national tourism industry grows. The embassy's main task will be to promote trade and investment exchange with the Philippines. It will also conduct political monitoring.

Each of the new missions abroad will be staffed by two staff members posted abroad from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and a number of locally employed staff.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# New initiative to protect women and girls against violence in Myanmar

Published 10 December 2015 Updated 10 December 2015

Today, in connection with International Human Rights Day, Sweden is launching a new initiative to safeguard the rights of women and girls in Myanmar. The project will be conducted jointly with Finland and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and will encompass SEK 100 million over a three-year period. Sweden's contribution will amount to SEK 20 million.

The 'Women and Girls First' project will be implemented in cooperation with local and international partners and focus on the most vulnerable women and girls in the remote and conflict-affected provinces of Rakhine, Kachin and northern Shan. The aim of the initiative is to prevent and respond to the violence committed against women and girls in Myanmar, and to improve their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The initiative covers preventive measures in the areas of reproductive health and emergency medical care, as well as care, support and treatment for women subjected to violence and rape. Another aim is to increase women's and girls' knowledge about their rights, and also to mobilise men and boys in gender equality work. Improved health for women and children, with a special focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights, is also one of three focus areas in Sweden's bilateral cooperation strategy for the country.

"I welcome the launch of this initiative together with our cooperation partners, UNFPA and Finland, to address violence against women and girls. This is particularly important in areas of conflict and where certain ethnic



groups, such as the Rohingya, experience discrimination and lack protection and care in the event of abuse," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. "The recent elections show that the people of Myanmar voted for a change towards democracy, and we look forward to working closely with the new government," she adds.

One important step in the democratisation process is to increase respect for the human rights of all people in Myanmar, regardless of ethnicity, religion or sex. This is why it is important to change men's attitudes, increase women's knowledge about their rights and contribute to the building of a state under the rule of law, where everyone is given protection.

"This initiative is an important part of Sweden's support to Myanmar. Promoting gender equality and women's and girls' enhanced possibilities is a prerequisite for Myanmar being able to move towards a more democratic society. 'Women and Girls First' aims to enable just this kind of development," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received President Ashraf Ghani of Afghanistan in Stockholm

Published 30 November 2015 Updated 30 November 2015

On Friday 4 December, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven received the President of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani, in Stockholm. They met to discuss topics including developments in Afghanistan, Swedish support and the international refugee crisis. A cooperation agreement between the two countries was also signed.

## Invitation to press conference

Mr Löfven will receive President Ghani in the entrance to Rosenbad.  
Photo opportunity.

Discussions.  
Photo pool.

Signing of cooperation agreement.  
Photo pool.

Joint press conference with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and President Ashraf Ghani in Bella Venezia Language: English.

The press conference will be webcast live on [www.regeringen.se](http://www.regeringen.se)

## To editorial offices

Special media accreditation obtained via the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is

required to follow the programme. Please apply to the International Press Centre at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs no later than 18.00 on 2 December.

Apply for accreditation

The assembly place and time for each programme point will be announced to the media representatives concerned.

## Programme points, 4 December

During his visit to Sweden, President Ghani will also hold bilateral talks with Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist, and meet Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin. He will also meet Speaker of the Riksdag Urban Ahlin, and have a meeting with Crown Princess Victoria at the Royal Palace. He will also undertake a visit to the KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

### Morning

Visit to the KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

Meeting with Speaker of the Riksdag Urban Ahlin.

### Late morning

Bilateral talks between President Ghani and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

Photo pool.

### Afternoon

Bilateral talks between President Ghani and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

Photo pool.

Crown Princess Victoria receives President Ghani at the Royal Palace.

Photo pool.

Mr Löfven receives President Ghani in the entrance to Rosenbad as above.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden increasing aid to Iraq and Syria

Published 26 November 2015 Updated 26 November 2015

Today, Sweden is taking a decision on support to the areas in Iraq that have been liberated from ISIL, as well as to areas in Syria controlled by the opposition and in affected neighbouring countries. The increased support totals SEK 79 million.

“This support to Iraq and Syria is important to enable a long-term solution to the conflicts. Sweden continues to work on both the political and the military track, as well as through aid measures,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

“These decisions must be seen as part of Sweden’s broad commitment in the Iraq and Syria crisis. This support to Iraq confirms Sweden’s intention to step up and take responsibility to meet the serious threat that ISIL represents today. Through the Syria fund we can help to ensure that more people in the areas of Syria seriously affected by war gain increased access to water and electricity, and we can contribute to food security,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.

**The UN’s stabilisation measures** in Iraq will receive a contribution of almost SEK 35 million. This money will go to a fund managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to support the civilian population in the areas liberated from ISIL, thus making it easier for internally displaced persons to return to their homes.

Sweden is providing a new contribution of SEK 16 million to the **Syria Recovery Trust Fund**, which finances rebuilding and the provision of basic social services in the areas of Syria controlled by the opposition.

Syria's neighbouring countries are being subjected to major strains as a result of the very large number of refugees from Syria who have sought protection in these countries. The Government has therefore decided to contribute SEK 28 million to **the Madad Fund**. This fund collects contributions from the EU budget and the Member States for support to refugees and host communities in Syria's neighbouring countries, primarily Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt. Certain countries in the Western Balkans will probably also receive support. In addition, aid can be given to activities within Syria.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Press release: Minister for Foreign Affairs to visit Ukraine together with Lithuania's Minister of Foreign Affairs

Published 13 November 2015 Updated 13 November 2015

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Lithuania's Minister of Foreign Affairs Linas Linkevičius will visit Ukraine on 17–18 November. The joint visit demonstrates Sweden's and Lithuania's support to Ukraine, both politically and of its reforms.

The ministers will visit Kyiv and Kharkiv. During their visit, the ministers will visit various official representatives, including President Poroshenko, Prime Minister Yatsenyuk and Minister of Foreign Affairs Klimkin, and representatives of the region and the city of Kharkiv.

The ministers will also meet civil society organisations and students.

The trip reflects the great importance Sweden and Lithuania attach to Ukraine.



Press release from Ministry of Defence, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden's contribution to the military training mission in northern Iraq

Published 05 November 2015 Updated 06 November 2015

The Government will present a bill to the Riksdag today on continued Swedish participation in the military training mission in northern Iraq. In the bill, the Government proposes that the Riksdag approve the participation of a Swedish armed force consisting of 35 persons in a military training mission within the framework of the coalition against ISIL in northern Iraq in 2016. The Swedish force is to help train the Iraqi armed forces so as to strengthen their capability to withstand ISIL's advances.

The planned Swedish military contribution should be seen as part of Sweden's broad support to Iraq, which also includes development cooperation and extensive humanitarian support to those affected by ISIL. The contribution is an expression of Sweden's intention to step up and take responsibility to meet the serious threat that ISIL represents today. Sweden also supports the coalition's civilian stabilisation efforts in areas liberated from ISIL.

The basis in international law is comprised of Iraq's request to the international community to provide assistance in fighting ISIL and the bilateral agreements that Iraq enters into with the states that contribute to the mission.

The decision also specifies that the Swedish force can, if necessary, be

reinforced by up to 85 persons (for evacuation and reinforcement operations).





Press release from Ministry of Defence, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Continued Swedish presence in Afghanistan

Published 05 November 2015 Updated 06 November 2015

The Government will present a bill to the Riksdag today on continued Swedish participation in NATO's Resolute Support Mission (RSM), which provides training, advice and assistance in Afghanistan. Together with the 40 or so other troop-contributing countries, Sweden is taking part in the NATO-led mission at the request of the Afghan government. At present, the Resolute Support mission consists of just over 13 000 personnel.

The Government expects that the Swedish military contribution of no more than 50 persons on the ground in Afghanistan will continue until the end of December 2016, with focus remaining on northern Afghanistan. The Afghan security forces have been responsible for maintaining security in the country since summer 2014. The Resolute Support mission is a step in the gradual phasing out of an international military presence in the country. However, the last year has seen an increased level of violence, with the Taliban expanding their attacks against the Afghan government. Consequently, the Afghan government has requested continued support at current levels, which NATO is expected to offer in 2016. The mission is a non-combat mission aimed at providing continued training and advice to the Afghan security forces and relevant institutions in Afghanistan to help continue to build and develop society.

The bill also describes the extensive civilian involvement that Sweden has with Afghanistan, particularly in the area of development cooperation. Sweden has announced long-term support with a total indicative volume range of SEK 8–8.5 billion for the period 2015–2024 within the framework

of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF) of July 2012. The TMAF affirms the mutual commitments of the international community and the Afghan government regarding development cooperation in Afghanistan.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# The Government decides to open a Consulate General in New York

Published 29 October 2015 Updated 29 October 2015

The Government decided today to upgrade the Swedish presence in New York by opening a salaried Consulate General. The Consulate General will open in December and replace the honorary consulate currently there.

The focus of the Consulate General in New York will be to promote the image of the innovative, creative and competitive Sweden of today. Trade and investment promotion at the Consulate General is expected to largely focus on conveying knowledge and offering a network and platform for promotion activities for Swedish companies.

“In light of Sweden’s new export strategy, we see a need of a Consulate General in New York, one of the world’s most important cities for promoting Sweden as a brand. The business sector would like to see an official Swedish presence on the ground to promote contacts, trade and investments with the United States,” says Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg.

The Consulate General will also work with cultural promotion and contribute to increased cooperation between Sweden and the United States in the area of culture, and also strengthen opportunities for Swedish cultural practitioners to work in New York. It will also conduct consular activities.

“Having a Consulate General in one of the world’s most important cities means that we can create greater knowledge about, and confidence in, Sweden and Swedish solutions. New York is a priority city for Sweden with a large number of Swedes and numerous Swedish companies there”, says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

For a time, the Consulate General will use the premises that currently house

the honorary consulate. Next year, the Consulate General plans to move to new offices. The new mission abroad will be staffed by two people from the MFA and a number of locally employed staff. The Government has not yet decided who will be appointed Consul General.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment,  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Binational Commission Sweden-South Africa

Published 16 October 2015 Updated 16 October 2015

This weekend, Deputy President of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa will arrive in Stockholm with a ministerial delegation and a number of business representatives. The reason for the visit is the Binational Commission (BNC) between Sweden and South Africa, which is meeting in Stockholm on 19–20 October 2015.

During his visit Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa will meet with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Deputy Prime Minister Åsa Romson, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Strategy, Future Issues and Nordic cooperation Kristina Persson.

The Binational Commission meets every other year and is a platform for regular dialogue between the countries, intended to develop our relations in a broad sense. This year's meeting is the ninth.

The meeting will be hosted by Deputy Prime Minister Åsa Romson. The South African delegation will be led by Deputy President Ramaphosa, who will also meet several other Swedish government representatives and business leaders in the course of his visit.

“The Binational Commission is an important platform for Sweden's cooperation with South Africa and I look forward to constructive discussions with my South African colleagues,” says Ms Romson.

A new committee on environmental, water and energy issues is expected to be established at this year's meeting. This will create a space for cooperation

between Swedish agencies such as the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Swedish Chemicals Agency and the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management and their South African counterparts. The intended purpose of the committee is to have constructive discussions on shared social challenges, where exchanges of knowledge and closer cooperation in the area can contribute to finding new solutions.

A special business delegation from South Africa is also on the trip to Stockholm. Its programme has been organised by Business Sweden and will offer opportunities for discussions with Swedish business representatives.



Press release from Prime Minister's Office

# Prime Minister Stefan Löfven to receive President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil in Stockholm

Published 16 October 2015 Updated 16 October 2015

On Monday 19 October, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will receive the President of Brazil, Dilma Rousseff, in Stockholm. They are meeting to discuss economic exchanges between Sweden and Brazil, climate and sustainability, and defence.

During her visit to Sweden, President Rousseff will also participate with Mr Löfven in a business forum and a meeting with representatives of the City of Stockholm. She will also go to see Norra Djurgårdsstaden and visit companies in Kista and Linköping.

## Programme points, 19 October

### **09.30 Business Forum**

Mr Löfven and Ms Rousseff address a business forum at Grand Hôtel.

### **10.00 Reception by the Prime Minister at Rosenbad**

Mr Löfven and Ms Rousseff arrive at Rosenbad.

Photo opportunity at the entrance.

Discussions.

Photo pool – meeting room.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for Higher Education and Research Helene Hellmark Knutsson, Minister for Social Security Annika Strandhäll and Minister for Housing, Urban Development

and Information Technology Mehmet Kaplan will also take part in the discussions.

### **11.15 Press conference at Rosenbad**

Mr Löfven and Ms Rouseff hold a joint press conference in Bella Venezia.

The press conference will be webcast live on [www.regeringen.se](http://www.regeringen.se).

### **Lunch at City Hall**

The City of Stockholm hosts a lunch for Mr Löfven and Ms Rouseff at City Hall.

Photo pool.

### **15.50 Visit to Saab in Linköping**

Ms Rouseff and Mr Löfven visit Saab in Linköping.

## **Advance registration**

Advance registration and/or application for a place in the photo pool is required. Please register/apply via the International Press Centre at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs no later than 16.00 on 16 October. More detailed information about times and venues of meetings will be sent to media representatives concerned.

Advance registration/application for place in photo pool





Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment,  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Swedish Government initiates High-Level Group in UN

Published 25 September 2015 Updated 25 September 2015

World leaders are meeting in New York today to adopt 17 global Sustainable Development Goals, which are to be achieved by 2030.

The true test of the entire 2030 Agenda and the global goals is not the adoption of the goals, but that they are implemented throughout the world. The importance of maintaining strong political momentum to realise the new goals cannot be overstated.

The Swedish Government has therefore taken the initiative to start a High-Level Group consisting of nine leaders from various parts of the world to ensure that the 17 global goals and the 2030 Agenda are implemented at all levels of society.

The High-Level Group will work in various ways to promote exchange of experience and discussions on challenges and solutions between governments, civil society, the private sector and international organisations.

Through personal discussions with other world leaders, the High-Level Group will contribute to far-reaching and genuine commitment to implementing the global goals and the 2030 Agenda.

The following are members of the High-Level Group:

- Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff
- Colombia's President Juan Manuel Santos
- Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
- Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Löfven

- South Africa's President Jacob Zuma
- Tanzania's President Jakaya Kikwete
- Germany's Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel
- Tunisia's President Beji Caid Essebsi
- Timor-Leste's Prime Minister Rui Maria de Araújo



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden contributing to the IAEA's verification of Iran's nuclear technology programme

Published 11 September 2015 Updated 11 September 2015

In connection with the board meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Thursday, Sweden's Ambassador Helen Eduards announced that Sweden is to contribute SEK 1 million to the IAEA for its verification mission in Iran.

The IAEA has a key role to play in verifying that Iran fulfils its commitments under the agreement on the country's nuclear technology programme. The agreement was reached on 14 July between Germany, France, the United Kingdom, China, Russia, the United States (EU3+3) and Iran, and it was hailed by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström as a diplomatic victory.

“Sweden has been working for a long time to protect and strengthen the IAEA's important mandate for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. I am therefore pleased that Sweden is now able to contribute in this way to the verification mission in Iran,” says Ms Wallström.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment,  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# The Government to take part in global summit and UN General Assembly

Published 02 September 2015 Updated 10 September 2015

Reminder. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin and Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson will take part in the opening of the General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in late September.

This year, the week will begin with the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit. On 25–26 September, the new global Sustainable Development Goals, that are to replace the Millennium Development Goals, will be adopted by all UN Member States in the presence of representatives of civil society organisations and enterprises. Mr Löfven will give an address at the Summit, take part in seminars and roundtable discussions and hold bilateral meetings with other heads of government. Directly following the Summit, the General Assembly will open the General Debate of the 70th session since the United Nations was founded. Mr Löfven will deliver a speech on Swedish priorities in the UN and participate in panel debates on UN peacebuilding operations.

President Barack Obama, Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel and Pope Francis will also take part during the week.

Mr Löfven and Ms Lövin will be at the UN on 25–30 September. Ms Wallström will be in New York between 25 September and 3 October. Ms

Romson will take part in the Summit on 25–27 September.

## Press briefing

Ahead of the Swedish delegation's trip to the Summit and the UN General Assembly, we will hold a press briefing, where State Secretary Hans Dahlgren and State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Annika Söder and others will describe the Government's objective for the trip and the programme.

**Time:** Thursday 17 September at 16.00.

**Venue:** Rosenbad

Registration (required) to the press briefing via Dan Lundqvist Dahlin:  
[dan.lundqvist.dahlin@regeringskansliet.se](mailto:dan.lundqvist.dahlin@regeringskansliet.se)

## Accreditation

Accreditation for the Summit closes on 9 September.

Information on accreditation is available on the following web page:  
<http://www.un.org/en/media/accreditation/UNGA70.shtml>

For questions about accreditation, please contact Jeanette Mattsson, Press and Communication Officer at Sweden's Permanent Representation at the UN: [jeanette.mattsson@gov.se](mailto:jeanette.mattsson@gov.se), tel: 001 212 583 2591.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Foreign minister takes part in meeting of UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing

Published 28 August 2015 Updated 28 August 2015

On 28–29 August, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström is in Alpbach, Austria. Ms Wallström and the other members of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing will discuss proposals on how the humanitarian financing system can be reformed. This is the third meeting of the High-Level Panel.

The agenda includes discussions on the alternative solutions to humanitarian financing that are available from UN Member States, the private sector, individuals and regional organisations to bridge the growing gap between global humanitarian needs and available financial resources. In addition to the High-Level Panel discussions, the programme also includes presentations from the International Committee of the Red Cross and the World Bank. The High-Level Panel will also discuss which reform proposals should be presented to the UN Secretary-General at next year's World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul.

Apart from the High-Level Panel's work, Ms Wallström will also take part in an open panel debate together with the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator and others during her visit. The theme of the discussion is humanitarian effectiveness.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Stefan Löfven to receive Marshall Islands President Christopher J. Loeak

Published 21 August 2015 Updated 21 August 2015

On Tuesday 25 August, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will receive Marshall Islands President Christopher J. Loeak for bilateral talks on issues including the challenges of climate change and what is needed for sustainable development.

A photo opportunity for the media will be arranged during the visit.

President Loeak will visit Sweden on 23–27 August to take part in *World Water Week*, which is being organised by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).

In connection with his visit, President Loeak will have discussions with Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström in addition to the bilateral discussions with Prime Minister Löfven.

## Press programme 25 August

10.30 Prime Minister Löfven receives President Loeak on his arrival at Rosenbad. Photo opportunity.

10.35 Bilateral talks. Rosenbad Dining Room.

### Photo pool

Enter via Kopparporten, Rosenbad, from 09.45. Photographers must arrive

by 10.15.

Please bring your press credentials.

Registration required via email to Dan Lundqvist Dahlin





Press release

# Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete to visit Sweden

Published 29 May 2015 Updated 29 May 2015

On Wednesday 3 June, Tanzania's President Jakaya Kikwete will arrive in Stockholm for a visit at the invitation of Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

Programme points include an audience with HM The King and talks with the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Information Technology. President Kikwete will also have lunch talks with the Speaker of the Riksdag and will visit Karolinska Institutet, Sida and Business Sweden.

The programme will have a special focus on promoting trade relations between Tanzania and Sweden, especially in the areas of ICT, energy, and infrastructure. The agenda for the visit also includes development cooperation, and domestic policy and regional development in Tanzania's neighbourhood.

## **Photo opportunity**

17.15: Prime Minister Löfven receives President Kikwete at the entrance to Rosenbad. Photo opportunity.

17.20: Bilateral talks. Rosenbad Dining Room. Photo pool.

Photographers enter via Kopparporten between 16.45 and 17.00. Please bring your press credentials.

Please notify Dan Lundqvist Dahlin if you wish to attend.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Prime Minister invites Mahmoud Abbas

Published 04 February 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

**Prime Minister Stefan Löfven has invited Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to Sweden.**

On 10 February, Mr Löfven and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will meet President Abbas to discuss bilateral relations, the peace process in the Middle East and how Sweden can contribute following its recognition of the State of Palestine.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Foreign minister to UN Headquarters and Washington DC

Published 21 January 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will visit New York and Washington DC on 25–29 January. During her trip, Ms Wallström will visit the UN in New York and meet with representatives of the US government in Washington DC.

Among those Ms Wallström will meet in New York on 25–27 January are UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson. In addition, her programme includes a number of events related to peace, security, development and human rights. Ms Wallström will present an international report on how UN peacekeeping operations can be improved. She will also host a high-level panel on tolerance and dialogue in the fight against radical extremism, take part in a seminar on how to limit trade in conventional weapons, and discuss feminist foreign policy with women UN ambassadors.

“The trip is a way of showing the Government’s strong commitment to the UN. I look forward to the meetings with leading representatives of the UN and other Member States to discuss what we can do together to meet the great challenges facing the world. The trip is also an important part of Sweden’s candidacy for a seat on the UN Security Council in 2017–2018,” says Ms Wallström ahead of her trip.

The foreign minister’s trip will continue in Washington DC on 28–29 January. She will meet representatives of the US government and think tanks for discussions on current foreign policy issues. The discussions will also focus on cooperation opportunities with the US in the areas of gender equality, disarmament and climate.

“The US is a key global actor with whom Sweden has very good relations. I very much look forward to meeting my counterparts in Washington to discuss how Sweden and the US can further strengthen their cooperation,” says Ms Wallström ahead of her trip.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs to visit Maputo

Published 14 January 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will visit Maputo on 15 January to attend the inauguration of Mozambique's new president, Filipe Jacinto Nyusi.

Sweden and Mozambique have historically enjoyed good relations that go back to the time of Sweden's support for the liberation movements in Southern Africa before independence. As our second largest recipient of bilateral aid, Mozambique has long been a close partner of Sweden.

This visit will provide Ms Wallström with the opportunity to meet many leading representatives of other countries, especially in this important region.

“Sweden and Mozambique have long-standing and excellent relations. My visit will be an opportunity to consolidate these, but also to look ahead to how we can broaden and develop our relations. Mozambique has a great deal of potential as a growth market in Africa, but it also faces many challenges,” says Ms Wallström.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office

# Stefan Löfven to meet Nobel Peace Prize winner Kailash Satyarthi

Published 09 December 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

On Friday 12 December, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will meet Nobel Peace Prize winner Kailash Satyarthi for lunch at Rosenbad. Ministers Margot Wallström, Ylva Johansson and Åsa Regnér will also be present.

Kailash Satyarthi was awarded the prize jointly with Malala Yousafzai for his struggle against the suppression of children and young people, against child labour and for the right of all children to education.

Date and time: Friday 12 December at 12.00.

Venue: Bella Venezia, Rosenbad.

Photo opportunity. Assembly for photographers at Bella Venezia at 11.30. Prior notification of attendance is obligatory.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden recognises Palestine and increases aid

Published 30 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

Sweden has today recognised the State of Palestine. The Government considers that the international law criteria for the recognition of Palestine have been satisfied.

Sweden hopes that its decision will facilitate a peace agreement by making the parties less unequal, supporting the moderate Palestinian forces and contributing to hope at a time when tensions are increasing and no peace talks are taking place.

“The purpose of Sweden’s recognition is to contribute to a future in which Israel and Palestine can live side by side in peace and security. We want to contribute to creating more hope and belief in the future among young Palestinians and Israelis who might otherwise run the risk of believing that there is no alternative to the current situation,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström (Social Democratic Party).

The Government also adopted a five-year aid strategy including substantially increased support to Palestinian state-building. Bilateral aid to Palestine will increase by SEK 500 million to SEK 1.5 billion over the next five-year period, in addition to Sweden’s substantial humanitarian assistance.

“Sweden’s contribution aims among other things to make it easier for Palestinians to support themselves and to continue living where they are, to strengthen women’s empowerment and strengthen resilience to environmental and climate changes. This increased assistance means support to all moderate and non-violent forces in Palestine promoting democracy, human rights and gender equality,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin (Green Party).







Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Nordic energy efficiency and humanitarian support initiative in eastern and southern Ukraine

Published 29 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

The Nordic foreign ministers today decided to provide early assistance to Ukraine in the field of humanitarian reconstruction and energy efficiency. The aid is to be made available for the affected and vulnerable regions of eastern and southern Ukraine.

- It is vital to assist the local population and internally displaced people, and thus to start a normalisation process in these parts of Ukraine, the foreign ministers of the Nordic countries said.

The assistance will be provided through the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO), which has a well established and effective presence in Ukraine.

In the first instance, the Nordic initiative will address key social infrastructure such as schools, kindergartens and health centers, and possibly also damaged housing in certain cases.

Some projects already in the NEFCO pipeline will be accelerated to the extent possible, while other new projects will be identified and agreed with the Ukrainian authorities. Funding of EUR 2 million will be available for this purpose in 2014, with further allocations in 2015.

Under this initiative, NEFCO will be able to provide matching funding for other suitable projects. Projects will be implemented in districts in Eastern and Southern Ukraine, including in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions.

This Nordic initiative will cover only a small part of Ukraine's reconstruction and energy efficiency needs. The intention is to start a process that may expand during implementation and that could be linked to Ukraine's national programmes and other international assistance.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Wallström to take part in international donor conference on Gaza

Published 10 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

On Sunday 12 October, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström will take part in an international donor conference in Cairo on the reconstruction of Gaza.

The conference will be attended by ministers and representatives from around 70 countries, including Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini and US Secretary of State John Kerry.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Keynote speech by Ms Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden, to the High-Level Panel on Water Diplomacy during World Water Week on 28 August 2019

Published 28 August 2019

Check against delivery.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here today and discuss an issue of such fundamental importance to humanity: water.

I will start by quoting a favourite author of mine, Rolf Edberg:

“The eternal life cycle of water; it is the same water that I can drink from a small cold creek in the north of Sweden that once filled Cleopatras bath tub, been carried in clay vessels across deserts, that has rained down on the forests in the Amazons, passed through the cooling system of a nuclear reactor or sifted through the mouth of a hump whale or maybe fallen as snow flakes over my house on a dark winter evening. “

I would like to thank the Stockholm International Water Institute for organising this remarkably successful and internationally renowned event – World Water Week – over the past 29 years. And I would also like to thank all participants here today: researchers, experts, decision-makers and leaders in various sectors with connections to water. Your contribution to our

common knowledge and a future of sustainability is indispensable.

As many of you know, Sweden experienced one of its hottest summers in recorded history last year and suffered devastating forest fires.

We managed to bring the fires under control, thanks to the cooperation of national and international forces, but also thanks to the water in nearby lakes that responders could use to fight the fires.

Water saved our forests and our local communities.

Without water no society can survive. A large proportion of the world's population lives around river basins where water is shared by two or more countries.

The way in which water is shared and managed by communities has an impact on human life, economic growth and sustainable development. But, given its vital importance, water can also – as we all know – be a source of tension and conflict, threatening peace.

Climate change is the greatest challenge of our generation. Its impacts are already being felt around the world, with threats in many sensitive areas, including ecosystems, the environment, health, agriculture, food security, and peace and security.

Droughts and floods now occur more frequently than previously, forcing people to leave their homes. Some of the regions most affected by conflict also suffer from water scarcity, and climate change will exacerbate these problems.

To implement the goals set in the ambitious 2030 Agenda, we need to address the root causes of conflicts and poverty.

In 2017, during Sweden's term on the UN Security Council, a landmark resolution was adopted in relation to Lake Chad that emphasised the need for climate-related risk assessments and risk management strategies by governments and the UN. It was one of our key goals to make this connection clear also to the Security Council.

And it was the first resolution of its kind.

During my visit to the Sahel region in July last year, I personally met people who were already suffering from the severe impacts of climate change.

I met people displaced by drought and floods, people who were unable to feed their families because of extreme weather patterns. Such hardship drives tensions and mistrust, and prolongs conflict, making it much harder to adapt to the challenges of climate change.

To quote UN Secretary-General António Guterres: “Climate change is a direct threat in itself and a multiplier of many other threats – from poverty to displacement to conflict.”

Sweden’s commitment to the prevention agenda pursued by the Secretary-General – to a more holistic approach to prevention – builds on the acknowledgment of many varied and interlinked drivers of conflict.

The management of transboundary waters is an issue where conflict prevention and diplomatic efforts such as water/hydro-diplomacy can be carried out in a more holistic way.

I remember from when I was a European commissioner a conflict over a river and how diverging it would affect the surrounding countries. This created a very tense debate that showed how sensitive these questions are.

The EU has recently updated its Council conclusions on Water Diplomacy, and intends to enhance its diplomatic engagement on water as a tool for peace, security and stability.

Conflict is often an inevitable and always a transformative force in societies. The challenge is to find ways of managing and transforming conflict in peaceful and constructive ways.

The prevention of violent conflict is a key Swedish foreign policy priority, and was one of our main priorities during our membership of the Security Council, along with climate change, security, and the women, peace and security agenda. All of these converge when we discuss inclusive approaches to water diplomacy.

Women play critical roles in conflict prevention and natural resource management at local level. Yet their participation in political leadership, water management and formal peace processes remains disappointingly low.

It is crucial to remove obstacles to women’s participation in decision-making. Empowering women saves lives.

Networks of women mediators are a good example of how women can

contribute to conflict resolution. In 2015, I launched the Swedish Women's Mediation Network, which was inspired by a similar network in Africa.

Its members have supported dialogue and peace-building efforts in several conflict situations, focusing primarily on supporting local women in taking active roles in conflict resolution, including as part of SIWI's work in the Nile Basin.

Cooperation between countries is crucial, and has far-reaching benefits for societies, people, the environment and stability. It builds trust and reduces the risk of conflict.

There is great potential in strengthened cooperation on shared water resources in regions such as the Nile Basin, which has immense strategic value for the whole of North East Africa.

Increased cooperation is necessary, not least in light of the high population growth rate and the negative consequences of climate change that we are already seeing today.

Strengthened cooperation also brings significant prospects of positive outcomes on regional peace and stability, economic development, sustainability and environmental protection.

We need to cooperate closely with all stakeholders, and I believe that strong institutions are the best guarantors of such cooperation. Strong multilateral institutions at international, regional and sub-regional level are essential to managing differences, including over shared resources such as water.

Our position continues to be to support dialogue and strengthen the capacity of riparian states to cooperate and negotiate through intergovernmental structures, such as river basin organisations.

Sweden's foreign, security, and development policies go hand in hand. We have the world's first feminist foreign policy and feminist government and we are strong supporters of the women, peace and security agenda.

It is crucial to consider the gender-related effects of conflict, poverty and the scarcity of basic resources, such as water. My visit to the Sahel region clearly confirmed the need for consistency between foreign, security and development policy to achieve greater synergies and impact.

To contribute to help tackle the effects of climate change in the Sahel region

we decided to top up our assistance to climate- and security-related efforts there with approximately 40 million USD for the period 2018–2021.

Dear friends,

Climate change is a reality that affects us all, even here in the Northern Hemisphere. There are no one solution to these effects but instead they must be tackled collectively and with a wide range of political tools.

The international community must come together and step up our action to address current and future risks and challenges in an integrated manner, through sustainable and climate-resilient water management and inclusive cooperation.

Now is the time to act with science and knowledge and I know that all of you here today are willing and able to do so.

Because a world where water is not seen as a scarce and valuable resource is a world where no society can prosper. I look forward to fruitful and rewarding discussion here at this World Water Week.

Thank you for listening.





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Margot Wallström at Taras Shevchenko National University

Published 03 June 2019

Kyiv, Ukraine. 31 May 2019. Check against delivery.

Don't envy, friend, a wealthy man:  
A rich man's life is spent  
Without a friend or faithful love --  
Those things he has to rent.

Don't envy anyone my friend,  
For if you look you'll find  
That there's no heaven on the earth,  
No more than in the sky.

Do you recognise it? Nje zavíduj bahátomu – of course, in your beautiful university, I had to cite Taras Shevchenko.

This is not only because I am a guest in Kyiv today. In fact, I often read from poems in my speeches, and there is a reason for it. Poetry, culture and music bring people together.

They help people to get to know and better understand each other. And isn't that what we need in foreign politics?

The topic of today is “The future of Ukraine in Europe and the Eastern Partnership”. To me Ukraine is already European and I am optimistic about the future of your country, because you – the vibrant young generation – are the ones who will shape it.

But of course, there are challenges. In this address, I would like to point to

three issues that must be solved if we want prosperity for Europe and for Ukraine: to overcome polarisation, to increase equality and to build trust in public institutions. I will talk more about Europe and Ukraine and less about the Eastern Partnership.

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Firstly, looking at Europe today, we see a growing polarisation. Just take issues such as migration, climate change or gender equality as an example. There are really two opposing sides that both feel a kind of momentum.

Unfortunately, the public debate about these issues, especially on the internet, is often becoming poisoned by hatred and agitation.

In Ukraine, language and culture are being used to create artificial dividing lines in society. Also, the media landscape, where each candidate has their own TV channel, makes it difficult for people to evaluate parties and candidates.

We must overcome this polarisation, because it threatens to tear our societies apart. Our response should be to seek strength in diversity – to recognise that differences in backgrounds, opinions, worldviews, make us stronger together.

There must be forums where we can talk to each other in a respectful way. We are financing a project to strengthen public service in Ukraine. We hope that this will promote political discussions in Ukraine, and that it will reach all Ukrainians, regardless of their native language.

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Secondly, we must deal with social inequality. The wealth of this world is unprecedented, and yet, in Europe, many people live under social and economic conditions that are unacceptable.

Sometimes people talk about inequality as if it were something modern, something good for business, for entrepreneurship. But let me tell you this – those who say so have not experienced poverty themselves. Social security and equality is about dignity, and it is about giving people the same opportunities to do what they want in life.

I know that the EU, the IMF and other donors are demanding that Ukraine carry out difficult reforms. Let me underline that the point of these

conditions is to make life better for ordinary Ukrainians.

When talking about giving people equal opportunities, I mean the whole population. Not just fifty per cent.

We are strong advocates for gender equality in Sweden. It is the right thing to do, because how can we talk about democracy and human rights, if we leave half the population aside?

And it is the smart thing to do, since all studies show that societies where women and men have the same rights, representation and resources are more prosperous, happier and more secure.

There has recently been a strengthened focus on gender equality within the Eastern Partnership, and we will push for more. In Ukraine, there has been good progress in the last few years. I hope the President and the next parliament will build on it.

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The third issue is to build trust in public institutions. This is important in Ukraine, and it is something which is very close to the painful subject of corruption and rule of law.

How can you trust an institution if you suspect that its staff are filling their pockets and not doing their jobs?

Why pay taxes, if you don't have to, and if you suspect that your money is being misused in shady procurement schemes?

Why care about politics and reforms if you don't trust politicians?

To build trust takes effort and time. There must be a genuine willingness from the top to deal with it – and I hope that there is with this new administration – as well as a pressure from civil society and media. Looking at Ukraine, the conditions are there, and we will do all we can to help you with it.

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This would be challenging enough for a country that was not exposed to external aggression. We condemn the Russian aggression and the illegal annexation of Crimea. We will maintain sanctions until Moscow changes its behaviour, and we stand with Ukraine in solidarity.

Besides the military aggression, Ukraine and other European countries are exposed to disinformation and hybrid activities. What I've just mentioned: polarisation, social inequality and mistrust, are precisely the factors that hybrid warfare targets and fuels. So, these are not just issues that are important because they make you feel good, they are important parts of building resilience and security.

To finish, let me repeat that we have these challenges in common, and we must tackle them jointly. By supporting and learning from each other and by strengthening the values that underpin the European cooperation. This – to tackle challenges together – is also the cornerstone of the Eastern Partnership, and indeed, of our Swedish-Polish visit to Ukraine.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Margot Wallström at the Stockholm Internet Forum 2019

Published 17 May 2019

## Check against delivery

It is an honour to start off the conversation today at the 2019 Stockholm Internet Forum. I hope that the next few days will give you all a chance to discuss and form new partnerships.

Personally, I always find true inspiration when meeting such driven persons as all of you here today – you are the ones who drive democracy forward. I'm thinking not least of the civil society, NGOs, human rights defenders and all of you that make up the fundamental building blocks of what is democracy. Without your daily struggle democratic progress would not be possible.

This year's theme, shrinking democratic space online, is very timely to say the least.

I would like to address three issues today:

First, global trends

Second, threats and hate on the internet

and last, Sweden's role in meeting these challenges.

First, an unfortunate global trend that we see is that democracy is in decline,

Democratic principles and processes are being undermined, the rule of law scorned and human rights increasingly restricted and called into question.

Today, for the first time in over 40 years, more people are living in countries with authoritarian tendencies than in countries making democratic progress.

It is becoming more and more difficult for civil society, human rights defenders and media actors – democracy's voice bearers – to do their work. Those who speak out against unjust laws and government practices, challenge public opinion or those in power, and demand justice, equality, dignity and freedom, are being increasingly targeted. Most persons spend an increasing part of their lives online. The impact of the internet and social media has led to citizens being better informed and contributed towards a growing and more independent civil society in many places. Of course this also brings with it new challenges that I will return to later in this speech. Despite this, data shows that in 2018, global internet freedom declined for the eighth consecutive year.

Governments have censored information of public interest, state authorities have jailed more users for their online writing, and cyber-surveillance power has increased as bans on encryption and anonymity tools have become more common.

Freedom House reports that between June 2017 and May 2018, 71 % of all people with access to internet lived in countries where posting content on political, social, or religious issues could get you arrested.

In many contexts women have little if any access to public spaces, in these situations the internet is sometimes one of few areas accessible to women. But the shrinking democratic space is also affecting women's opportunities to access, participate and contribute through the internet and is thereby reinforcing the gender digital divide.

Second, I would like to address threats and hate on the internet,

The online climate for those exercising their right to freedom of expression online, such as human rights defenders and bloggers, is worsening. The online hatred and threats of violence are increasing in frequency and sophistication, with women and LGBT persons being particularly exposed. But increasingly also towards politicians or political activists. Especially women candidates who are now frequently verbally attacked online. This is

carried out not only by individuals, but also by state actors.

Hate, threats and violence against, and even killings of journalists in particular is a growing problem. According to Reporters Without Borders, 80 journalists were killed in the line of duty in 2018 – the deadliest year on record.

We can never accept threats and hatred being directed at journalists for merely doing their job. We can never accept that women journalists are often particularly subjected to threats and harassment just because they are women. We cannot stand idly by as organised online hate grows. When these voices are threatened, we must do everything in our power to protect them and empower them.

The Internet cannot be a place where hate campaigns and disinformation take over the flow on our social media. We together with social media actors have a common responsibility to make sure that our public debate is not ruined by extreme groups.

Thirdly, and lastly, I want to explain how the Swedish government is addressing these issues,

Despite all the challenges, there is a way forward.

We see a growing global understanding of the need to ensure privacy online. We see a growing political debate online, in countries where this was not possible offline.

Agenda 2030 and development goal 16 provide an excellent opportunity to counter the shrinking democratic space, online as well as offline.

The Freedom Online Coalition and its Advisory Network is one important actor in this joint effort, and I know that many of you are represented here today.

The importance of dialogue between stakeholders has never been more critical. This is why we argue that internet governance needs a multi-stakeholder system, where all stakeholders from governments to industry and civil society, are included.

As a response to the challenges democracy is facing globally, the Swedish government has also launched a drive for democracy. It will be reflected in

all areas of Swedish foreign policy, including in our development cooperation.

We intend to increase the democracy assistance and stand up for democracy's defenders and institutions, not least civil society. We will continue to support and protect human rights defenders, journalists, political activists, bloggers, academics and artists.

We will also support independent journalism and a pluralistic media environment, in order to strengthen democratic dialogue and counter disinformation and propaganda.

Sweden will continue to ensure a gender sensitive approach, striving for gender equality, through our feminist foreign policy and development cooperation. Democracy is not possible if half the population are not fully included.

Thanks to the internet, human rights are more widely known worldwide than ever before. The internet's capacity to bring people and politicians closer to one another must not be weakened, and we must stay on the task to bring everyone online.

Digitization gives us great opportunities. But the development also leads to risks and vulnerabilities. We must further strengthen both safety thinking and preventative protection. Human rights organizations, news agencies, companies, authorities and other organizations need to integrate information and cyber security as a natural part of their work. International cooperation on cyber security, both within the EU and in other international bodies, needs to be strengthened with the goal of a global, accessible, open and robust internet that is characterized by freedom and respect for human rights.

All around the world and every day human rights defenders, journalists, bloggers, actors, authors and other voices for democracy continue to beat the odds. As challenges mount we cannot forget to celebrate their successes. And we must continue supporting and defending them.

By doing this we can turn the tide and make sure that democracy and freedom of expression will carry us further into the 21st century, and that the internet does not succumb to hate and human rights abuse but instead becomes a place of debate and true dialogue.





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Margot Wallström at the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in Rovaniemi, 7 May 2019

Published 07 May 2019

Excellencies, colleagues, Arctic friends,

I have listened carefully to the wise words expressed by all friends of the Arctic gathered around this table - Arctic states and Permanent Participants. All in the presence of excellent, hardworking Arctic Council experts and dedicated observers.

The message I hear is clear.

I hear a testimony about the importance of the Arctic Council. To help keep the Arctic a region of peace, stability and international cooperation.

I hear a testimony about the opportunities this cooperation creates to realize the great potential inherent in this region.

But first and foremost, I hear a testimony about a region of continued challenges and change. And yes – the scientific findings are robust: a climate crisis in the Arctic is not a future scenario – it is happening as we speak. It affects all the people who exist and work here, their everyday lives and prospects for the future.

In Fairbanks two years ago, I posed the question what Mother Earth would say if she had a seat at our table.

That she perhaps would remind us how the Arctic functions as our cooling system, perhaps how concerned she would be by the fact that things are changing so fast.

That only two decades from now, the Arctic Ocean could be largely free of ice in the summer.

That our planet has done all she can to dampen and absorb, to keep Greenland and the permafrost in Siberia intact. That she has sent us no invoices. But that this is about to change.

If anything, this has become clearer since we last met in Fairbanks.

The IPCC 1,5 degrees report speaks volumes.

On my way here, I read the Arctic Climate Change Update 2019, highlighting new findings. Annual air temperatures in 2014 to 2018 were all greater than any year since 1900. Sea ice volume in September declining by 75 percent since 1979.

This all demonstrates the importance of a fact and science based approach and the urgency of action.

Needless to say, making observations are not the same thing as taking action. Our current and future to-do-lists are daunting.

But something has happened. Perhaps a global tipping point of awareness and dedication has been passed with the emergence of an inspiring new generation of climate activists - the Greta Thunberg's of this world.

And the fact that climate change is manmade, should paradoxically give room for some optimism. It's in man's and women's hands to do something about it.

As always, the voices of indigenous people remind us that we are links in a chain. I hope that my grandson will grow up and still be able to see living polar bears.

Friends,

We all know the Arctic region is not an isolated land of ice.

It is not only wild nature and harsh landscapes.

It is a region very much defined by the people living there.

The Swedish Arctic is reindeer herding, important mining and top

universities.

It is breath-taking environments and popular tourist destinations, high-tech IT installations and space industry.

I invite you to come and see for yourselves. In October, Sweden is pleased to co-host - with the European Union - an Arctic Forum in our northern city of Umeå, back-to-back with the Barents Euro-Arctic Council Ministerial. I hope to see you there.

The North should develop and its people be able to lead good lives. Just as in any other part of our communities.

This underlines the need for sustainable development - economic, social and environmental.

With science-based policies and with the Paris agreement and the 2030 Agenda in place, we have a solid base from which to do so.

Our common goal, to save the Arctic, requires new scientific research, business innovation, shared priorities and a political will.

We need to take many determined steps towards a sustainable future.

And largely, over the years, I think the Arctic Council has succeeded in building a political environment that generates win-win solutions. So it's with regret I note that this year we did not manage to agree on a joint declaration.

The challenges in the Arctic will require an even closer cooperation. I pledge that Sweden will continue to support a strong Arctic Council.

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Dear Timo, I want to thank you and your team for a job very well done and for your generous hospitality. And I want to support your Chairman's Statement from this meeting.]

And to Gudlaugur, good luck! And count on us. We're in this together!

Thank You!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Margot Wallström at R.M. Salas Memorial Lecture in New York

Published 02 May 2019

UNFPA, New York 30 April 2019 Check against delivery

Mr/Madam Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen – friends,

I am so honoured and happy to be here and to deliver the 15th Rafael M. Salas Memorial Lecture. It is also a great pleasure to do so this year, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of UNFPA. If I could I would mention all of you at UNFPA by name and thank you for all the important work that you are doing.

Rafael Salas was a pioneer in the field of population assistance. He succeeded in conveying a greater understanding of the crucial links between population and development to a broader audience, without ever losing sight of the people behind the statistics.

This year, we are also commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Programme of Action from the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994.

The UNFPA State of World Population Report 2019 outlines the journey we have been on since 1994 to ensure rights and choices for all. It shows that more needs to be done to close the gaps and achieve the goals agreed in Cairo.

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I would like to take this opportunity to talk to you about gender equality,

then ending on sexual and reproductive health.

Let me start by saying this: these are difficult times.

We had a recent reminder of this just last week, when the UN adopted resolution 2467 on sexual violence in conflict.

The resolution is important and we have welcomed it. It advances the agenda of conflict-related sexual violence by focusing on the survivors, including children conceived from rape. A thanks and congratulations to the special representative, her team, Germany and others who fought and worked hard on this resolution.

However, sexual and reproductive health and rights were not included in the resolution. Such language was blocked by three permanent members of the UN security council, and you can read media reports about how that happened.

In other words: the international community could not agree on stating the need for basic sexual and reproductive health and rights of survivors of sexual violence in conflict. Shall we deny these victims emergency contraceptives? Safe abortions? The right to know about their bodies, to know about HIV and AIDS?

With all our knowledge, with everything we know and are capable of – is this where we want to be?

I will come back to why this is such a serious problem and why we need to do more to reverse the trend. But first, I would like to look at the broader context of the backsliding of democracy in the world. I will then say a few words about how Sweden works to advance gender equality through our feminist foreign policy. And finally, I will come back to the issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights, and why we need to do more to promote it.

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What happened last week in the Security Council around resolution 2467 was deeply disappointing. But I cannot say it came as a surprise.

No, these pushbacks against gender equality and women's rights come at the same time we see a decline of democracy around the world:

This year, for the first time in decades, more people live in countries with authoritarian tendencies than in countries making democratic progress.

We see this in the statistics on journalists killed in the line of duty. We see it in the hate speech on Twitter and Facebook. We see it in the undermining of democratic processes, institutions and judicial systems, in the erosion of public confidence in democratic values, and as the global elite grows richer and richer, and social inequality rises.

Wherever authoritarianism gains ground, women always seem to be the first to suffer the consequences.

For some reason, authoritarian leaders seem to care a lot about women – in the wrong way. They care about how they dress, how they behave, their sexuality. They oppose women's rights to decide about their own sexual and reproductive health. They threaten women's rights activists. They talk about gender roles that the rest of us thought belonged in the last century.

Why?

I put my theory as a question: are these powerful men afraid? Afraid of losing power, of losing a position, losing wealth. But maybe also afraid of losing love? They are well aware of the power that women hold: of giving life and love.

At the same time, there are parts of the world where democracy is on the rise, and where gender equality is being strengthened. It serves as encouragement to the brave women and men that dare to stand up and speak out.

Last week I was in Tunis, attending the international Forum on Gender Equality, a follow-up to the Stockholm Forum last year. Tunisia began its democratic transition eight years ago, and remarkable progress has been made on the rule of law, freedom of speech, and the role of women.

Another example from the same continent – one of Africa's largest countries, Ethiopia – recently appointed a government in which half of the ministers are women.

World finance institutions such as the World Bank increasingly highlight the role of gender equality in economic growth. I.e. limited educational opportunities for girls cost countries between \$15 trillion and \$30 trillion in lost lifetime productivity and earnings.

When you look at this, it appears that both sides of this polarisation are feeling growing strength and confidence – a kind of momentum.

These examples concern gender equality, but this is really part of a larger struggle, between democracy and authoritarianism; between openness and repression; between hope and fear: yes, one might even call it the struggle between good and evil.

This may sound dramatic, but complacency is dangerous. We need to be alert – those of us who believe in openness and democracy must join forces.

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Excellencies,

Moving on to the practical side of gender equality, I would like to say a few words about our feminist foreign policy, and how we work globally.

I like to make the case that, to be relevant, policies must be concrete. Our work should seek to solve real problems in people's everyday lives, make improvements that can be felt directly.

By doing so, we also show sceptics and opponents of gender equality that there is nothing mysterious about it – that it is simply about removing obstacles that hinder women from having the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities as men.

This is an important starting point for our feminist foreign policy. To structure this work, we use three Rs – rights, representation and resources.

This means looking at whether women have the same right to education, to work, to marry who they want, to divorce, to run businesses, to open bank accounts, and so on. Are women represented where decisions are made that affect them – in government, parliament, local assemblies, businesses and peace talks? Do women's and girls' interests receive the same resources – in budgets, in development cooperation?

We must always remind sceptics that gender equality is not a women's issue – it is a human rights issue, a democracy and a peace and security issue. It improves life not only for one half of the population, but for both halves of the population.

Gender equality leads to more sustainable peace. This is what the

international community concluded 20 years ago when the UN adopted resolution 1325. More women means more peace!

And it goes beyond that. Gender equality is a matter of democracy. Of human rights. Of social development.

Gender-equal societies are more prosperous. They are healthier, their economies stronger, their people better educated.

The reason for this is not that women are better than men (although we sometimes might like to think so...). But that we bring different experiences and different knowledge to the table.

And it is encouraging that our feminist foreign policy has received so much attention and gained a following. Canada also pursues a feminist approach to its foreign policy and France engages in feminist diplomacy. We see a strong interest in Spain, in Tunisia as I mentioned, and in many more places around the world.

I hope that one day, we can add the United States to that list.

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Excellencies,

Let me move on to the third part of this lecture and return to the issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights, one of today's most pressing issues.

Let me mention some facts from this year's State of World Population Report.

- 214 million women want to prevent a pregnancy, but are not using modern methods of contraception.
- Every fifth birth takes place without the attendance of skilled health personnel.
- Every day, more than 800 women die from preventable causes during pregnancy and childbirth.

A lot of progress have been made by the UNFPA but more needs to be done. According to another report, an average of nine US dollars per capita a year would be enough to pay for the contraceptives and health services needed to address these needs.



Nine dollars a year per person, and we would save hundreds of thousands of lives, improve health and well-being, and increase productivity and household income.

And yet, this basic human right to decide over one's own body, sexuality and reproduction is so controversial. For some reason, the female body has become a battleground.

For Sweden, one consequence of this has been a stepping-up of support to organisations working for sexual and reproductive health and rights, where other actors have retreated. That is why Sweden is such a proud contributor of core support to UNFPA.

Somehow it becomes even more disturbing – offensive even – when women who have been affected by sexual violence in war and conflict are denied these rights.

Having worked as the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, I can tell you that I still have nightmares about the horrors and fate suffered by victims of these crimes. The terrified 15-year old girl, gangraped and shot. Absolutely not ready to have a child of her own in a society where children born out of rape were called snake-babies.

It was especially encouraging that Dennis Mukwege and Nadia Murad were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize last year for their work to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.

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Excellencies,

I want to mention Dennis Mukwege for one more reason: as a role model for men and boys. Because gender equality cannot be achieved without men. How can we achieve shared parental responsibility, economic opportunity, education and pay, without them?

And frankly, how can we ask women to participate and use their rights if they cannot even feel safe in their own homes? We must do all we can to stop violence against women.

I have something to say about fathers as well. You know, many successful women I have talked to seem to have had one thing in common while growing up: a supportive father who believed in his daughter.

That is not to diminish the role of mothers. But sometimes we forget how much it means to have a father who refuses to accept that his daughter does not have the same opportunities as a boy.

I would like to end this lecture by mentioning another man – Polish writer Tadeusz Rozewicz, who has written a poem about ‘Old women’ that I will soon read to you.

In this poem, Rozewicz, captures how, when boys and men are on the battlefields, it is women who keep life going.

And it makes me think: what would happen if women just stopped doing all this? If they stopped going to markets, cooking and taking care of children and households?

Rozewicz wrote:

I like old women;  
Ugly women, mean women  
They are the salt of the earth

Dictators clown around, come and go  
Hands stained with human blood

Old women get up at dawn  
buy meat, fruit, bread  
clean, cook, stand on the street

Their sons discover America  
perish at Thermopylae  
die on the cross  
conquer the cosmos

Old women are indestructible  
they smile knowingly

And when they die  
a tear rolls down a cheek  
and joins a smile on the face of a young woman

Women carry. They carry children, water, firewood and bread. They carry the responsibilities of keeping a family together. Of bringing up children and making life work despite sorrow. They carry the painful experiences of

violence. Despite all burdens, they carry on.

And – coming back to where I started – so must we. I encourage all of you to carry on, despite these gloomy times. Despite setbacks, challenges and headwinds.

There are so many fantastic people that works every day to turn this around. Let us join forces, let us fight for what we believe to be right. Please join me in the action for gender equality.

I believe that the world belongs to those who work to make it better. Let that be all of us.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Margot Wallström at the NPT Preparatory Committee in New York

Published 02 May 2019

## New York 30 April 2019 Check against delivery

Mr Chair,

Let me congratulate you on assuming the important task of chairing the third and final Prep Com of this Review Cycle. I can assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Swedish delegation.

Sweden associates itself with the general statement of the European Union, as well as the one delivered on behalf of the Nordic countries. My statement today adds a national perspective.

Mr Chair, dear delegates,

The backdrop to this gathering is the most challenging global security environment since the height of the Cold War. Its most striking feature is the severe lack of mutual trust. In a world with a global nuclear arsenal of some 15 000 warheads, each one capable of causing unspeakable human suffering, the absence of confidence-building is an acute problem.

As disarmament regimes are replaced by the modernisation of arsenals; key international treaties are left hollow or without proper implementation. The common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons has rarely felt more relevant. Yet it remains frustratingly remote, a frustration often heard from civil society that struggles, as they always have, to raise awareness on this important issue. A world where security is dependent on nuclear weapons remains a fragile one where a single human mistake can cause a humanitarian disaster. Or in the words of Dag Hammarskjöld:

”In this field, as we well know it, a standstill does not exist; if you do not go forward, you go backwards.”

So why are we here? We are here to turn this around, we are here because we are willing to carry this responsibility and start making real change towards building trust and ensuring disarmament. It is our job to find ways to turn the so-called doomsday clock back from its current setting of two minutes to midnight.

Mr Chair,

Reversing this negative trend will be highly challenging. Yet there can be few more urgent tasks. For the Swedish Government, it will be a top foreign and security policy priority for years to come. Three overarching considerations will guide Swedish policy:

Firstly, the crucial platform is the NPT.

For 50 years, the treaty has served global security very well – eminently underpinned by the IAEA, whose board Sweden is proud to have been nominated to chair in 2019-2020. But with the Review Conference in 2015 ending without consensus, and in view of developments since then, the future of the NPT cannot be taken for granted.

Nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states alike must now engage urgently, fully and pragmatically – also at a political level – to identify the common ground necessary for a successful outcome in 2020.

A good point of departure would be universal recognition that the three pillars of the treaty are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Progress will be difficult to achieve unless it is faithful to this logic at the heart of the NPT. To be clear: concrete disarmament commitments must be a central part of any consensus package.

To support such an endeavour, Sweden is hosting a ministerial-level meeting in Stockholm on 11 June. We have invited a number of countries with different security perspectives that can contribute in mobilising political support for an ambitious yet realistic agenda. From a Swedish perspective, this should include:

- a re-affirmation of the position of the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime;
- a re-affirmation of the continued validity of previous commitments made

- within the NPT framework – there can be no backtracking;
- an unequivocal expression against the notion of any nuclear use – “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought”
  - a package of measures, covering all three pillars of the treaty, which include progress in implementation of outstanding Article VI-related commitments; and, finally,
  - an improved NPT process which provides a framework for systematic follow-up in the years beyond 2020.

If NPT members can unite behind such a package, it would demonstrate that we are serious about breaking the vicious circle of recent years – that unlocking disarmament diplomacy is possible. That would be a very powerful political message, and my ambition is that the conference in Stockholm will contribute to this.

Secondly, we need to identify common ground, also on disarmament.

The traditional step-by-step approach contains several long-standing items, among them agreement on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, the entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and a global and legally binding agreement on negative security assurances.

The realisation of any of these would be a landmark achievement and their continued relevance should be recalled in 2020.

The NPT community cannot come empty-handed next year. There is a need for “actionable” steps – or stepping stones, a concept which was the subject of a side-event yesterday organised by Sweden in collaboration with Basic and further elaborated on in a working paper.

Areas to explore in the search for stepping stones should include:

- reducing the role of nuclear weapons in policies and doctrines, including by strengthening negative security assurances;
- reviving habits of cooperation, building on the fruitful interaction between nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states on disarmament verification;
- ways of enhancing transparency on arsenals and fissile material stocks; and
- measures designed to reduce the risks of intentional or unintentional nuclear use.

All these areas are part of the NPT acquis, not least the outcome document from the 2000 Review Conference and the 2010 NPT Action Plan.

Thirdly and finally, we must build trust!

The purpose of the stepping stones, in addition to addressing real short-term concerns, would be to build the trust and confidence lacking today. Such an approach could help to unlock current diplomatic blockages, in the process making the more substantial disarmament steps already on the diplomatic agenda a more realistic future possibility.

Disarmament as a discipline should not be reduced to playing the role of a passive observer awaiting the arrival of better times.

One issue of profound importance will be whether the crisis plaguing strategic arms control can be overcome and a nuclear arms race avoided. The United States and Russia should assume the special responsibilities that comes with their possession of the overwhelmingly largest arsenals. They should take immediate steps to rebuild a constructive arms control relationship. A crucial first step would be to save the INF Treaty, however slim the chances, by Russia verifiably demonstrating its full compliance. Further, I urge the United States and Russia to agree on a five-year extension of the New START, a critical deliverable for the Review Conference. In the period leading up to 2026, negotiations should be conducted on a successor regime, encompassing not only strategic but also, crucially, non-strategic nuclear weapons.

Mr Chair,

In the coming two weeks, delegations must come together and constructively set the stage for the Review Conference. Everyone has a role to play in making that conference the success global security so clearly needs. Multilateralism needs to be at the center of our efforts. On this, and many other aspects the United Nations Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament serves as an inspiration. Sweden is especially proud to be champion on gender in the disarmament machinery.

I remain convinced that a world free of nuclear weapons can only be achieved by building trust, delivering on commitments and brave political leadership. Turning this vision into reality is our joint responsibility and in the end the reason we are gathered here.

Thank you!





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Margot Wallström at Tunis Forum on Gender Equality

Published 25 April 2019

## Tunis 24 April 2019 Check against delivery

Monsieur le Premier ministre, Madame la directrice générale, ministres, excellences, amis.

Je suis tellement heureuse d'être ici avec vous aujourd'hui. Je voudrais remercier le gouvernement tunisien, l'ONU Femmes et le PNUD pour avoir organisé cette conférence. Et à toutes et à tous ici présents – merci, merci beaucoup pour tout ce que vous faites. Votre travail – souvent dans des conditions difficiles – rend le monde meilleur.

Vous êtes nombreux ici à m'avoir rejoint à la conférence à Stockholm l'année dernière ! L'élan créé là-bas est toujours vivant, grâce à vous, et grâce à la Tunisie, qui a pris le relais.

This is a relay that will continue in France and at the Global Forum next year. These are links in a chain, strongly connected to the Beijing platform, which will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2020.

Tunisia is the right place for us to meet. This is a country where gender equality has made great progress. Almost half of your local politicians here are women. And your law on violence against women is commendable.

You deserve our homage also in a broader sense. Over the last eight years you have made remarkable progress in the development of democracy, the rule of law and freedom of speech. Tunisia is on the right path, and I encourage you to continue along this route.

There are more than 600 participants from 80 countries gathered here today. Students, entrepreneurs, activists, politicians, researchers, bloggers. Imagine

how many cultures, religions, traditions, societies are represented. In this diversity, we are all united in our work for gender equality. And, believe me, this is a time when such unity is badly needed.

I want to begin by describing the challenges facing gender equality and the struggle between good and evil that we experience today. After that, I will make the case for being concrete in our work, and point out three areas where we need to step up our work for gender equality.

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Excellencies,

We meet in difficult times.

The latest example of this occurred yesterday, when the UN adopted resolution 2467 on sexual violence in conflict.

The resolution is important and we welcome it. It advances the agenda of conflict-related sexual violence by focusing on the survivors.

However, sexual and reproductive health and rights were not included in the resolution. You can all read media reports about how such language was blocked by some.

The international community could not agree on emphasising the need of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence for basic sexual and reproductive health and rights. Shall we deny these victims emergency contraceptives? Safe abortions? Sexual education? The right to know about HIV and AIDS?

I actually think that the United States should consider its membership in the Friends of WPS group.

That is where we are at the moment.

Women are always the first to suffer the consequences of authoritarianism, of a shrinking democratic space, of the questioning of human rights.

For some reason, these authoritarian leaders always start by caring about women. They care about how they dress, how they behave, their sexuality.

Just think of the opposition to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Of

threats to women's rights activists. This has all come in the wake of democratic backsliding, justified by a rhetoric of conservative values – talk of gender roles that we thought belonged in the last century.

And yet: why?

Sometimes, I think that these powerful men are afraid. They are afraid of losing power, of losing wealth, of losing love...

At the same time, we must not forget that in other parts of the world, there is a sense of momentum for gender equality.

Recently, one of Africa's largest countries, Ethiopia, appointed a government in which half of the ministers are women. I recently received news that a women mediators network in Asia has been initiated by the largest Muslim country in the world – Indonesia. World finance institutions such as the World Bank talk increasingly about the role of gender equality in economic growth.

In a way, what we are seeing is a growing polarisation, a situation in which two opposite camps are both feeling strong and confident.

I see this as part of a larger struggle, between trends of democracy and authoritarianism; between openness and repression; between hope and fear: yes, one might even call it a struggle between good and evil.

We need to recognise this division, and the fact that we have a responsibility; that it is up to us to fight for what we believe to be right.

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I often make the case that we have to be concrete in what we do. Our work should aim at solving real problems in people's everyday lives; at creating improvements that are felt directly.

Partly because real change is what people want, after all.

But also, by doing so, we show the sceptics and opponents of gender equality that there is nothing mysterious about it. That it is simply about taking down obstacles that hinder women from having the same rights, duties and possibilities as men.

This is an important principle of our feminist foreign policy. To structure this

work, we use three Rs – rights, representation and resources.

This means looking at whether women have the same right to education, to work, to marry who they want, to divorce, to run businesses, to open bank accounts, for example. Are women represented where decisions are made that affect them – in government, parliament, local assemblies, businesses and organisations? Do women's and girls' interests receive the same resources – in budgets, in development cooperation?

We must always remind sceptics that gender equality is not a women's issue – it is a human rights issue and a peace and security issue. It improves life not only for one half, but for both halves of the population.

Gender equality leads to more sustainable peace. This is what the international community concluded 20 years ago when the UN adopted resolution 1325.

And it goes beyond that. Gender equality is a matter of democracy. Of human rights. Of social development.

Societies where men and women are equal are more prosperous. They are healthier, their economies are doing better, they are better educated.

The reason is not that women are better than men (although we sometimes might like to think so...) But that we have different experiences and different knowledge.

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Now, let me point out three areas where our work can be stepped up.

Firstly, there is so much we can do to improve girls' and women's social and economic rights. I would encourage you to look at the World Bank report Women, Business and the Law for an excellent example of meticulous, systematic research on how women are discriminated against in economic activity in different countries. I actually think this report could be used as a tool, working our way through it, heading by heading, to eradicate discrimination against women.

In this area, the conditions for girls need particular attention. We should do more to support girls' right to education. And let me ask all of you to join me in the battle against child marriages. This practice has such a high price. It deprives girls of the right to be children, of their education, and of their right

to their own bodies. And imagine what an obstacle this is to development, how much a society loses, when so much potential is trapped.

Secondly, as I mentioned before, there is the issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights. This is, perhaps, the area which is the subject of the most resistance from conservative forces. It is essential to counter this pressure by compensating with investments in maternal health, safe and legal abortions, access to contraception and sex education.

Thirdly: nothing about them without them. Women's participation – in democratic institutions, in justice systems, in business, in peace processes, in civil service. We should never accept that women have less than half the representation. If someone ever asks why, you might just ask them to look around. There's not much to lose by giving it a try, is there?

In all this work, we must do all we can to stop violence against women. Because how can we ask women to participate, to make use of rights and resources, if they are not safe even in their own homes?

Let me stress that gender equality cannot be achieved without men and boys. We all need to work together. Men and boys are central to contributing to an equal sharing of parental duties, influence, finances, education and pay.

I want to say something about fathers. Many successful women I have talked to seem to have one thing in common: a supportive father who believed in his daughter. That is not to diminish the role of mothers. But sometimes we forget how much it means to have a father who does not accept that his daughter does not have the same opportunities as a boy.

You might have seen the photo exhibition 'Swedish dads', which has now become 'Rwandian dads', 'Latvian dads' and 'Tunisian dads'. I know that this work has instigated debate and discussion in many countries – also here in Tunisia.

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Excellencies,

Some of you might have heard of Greta Thunberg – a 16-year-old girl from Sweden who has become world-famous for her fight against climate change.

There is one quote that I would like to share – when adults have been saying that it gives them hope to see the activism of younger generations, she has

said “I don’t want your hope. I want you to panic. Then I want you to act”.

She is talking about the climate, another defining issue of our time. But maybe there is something for us to take with us, too – do we sometimes talk and debate too much, and act too little?

And yet, I cannot help but feel hopeful. Meeting with all of you, learning about your work, and your courage.

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I would like to end this speech by citing a poem by the Polish writer Tadeusz Rozewicz, about ‘Old women’. What he captures is this – when boys and men are on the battlefields, it is women who keep life going. They are the ones who go to markets, cook and take care of households. Born in Poland in the 1920s, he surely knew what he was writing about...

I like old women;  
Ugly women, mean women  
They are the salt of the earth

Dictators clown around, come and go  
Hands stained with human blood

Old women get up at dawn  
buy meat, fruit, bread  
clean, cook, stand on the street

Their sons discover America  
perish at Thermopylae  
die on the cross  
conquer the cosmos

Old women are indestructible  
they smile knowingly

And when they die  
a tear rolls down a cheek  
and joins a smile on the face of a young woman

I think this poem illustrates how women carry. They carry children, water, meat and bread, but they also carry the responsibilities of keeping a family together. Of bringing up children and making life work despite sorrow. They

carry the painful experience of violence. Despite all burdens, they carry on.

And so must we. Let us carry on the work for gender equality. Despite the setbacks, with the help of all good forces.

I am confident that the world belongs to those who work to make it better. And that means all of you. Bon courage!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech

# Speech by Margot Wallström at Commemoration Ceremony Marking 25 Years since the Genocide in Rwanda

Published 12 April 2019

Stockholm 10 april 2019 Check against delivery

Ambassador, Speaker of the Parliament, Excellencies, Ladies and  
Gentlemen,

I am humbled and honoured to take part in this ceremony to commemorate  
the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, 25 years ago.

Special persons I have not met,  
Dear friends I have not made,  
Whose pictures I can still see,  
But whose features will no more be,

The voices I have not heard,  
The laughter I have not shared,  
The treasure we have all lost,  
The mother I loved the most,

I miss you, like a fish misses the sea.

In this poem, to “Rwandians I didn’t grow to see”, Thierry Gatete captures  
some of the unspeakable. It has now been 25 years.

To me, this is an occasion to talk about three things: remembrance, reflection  
and commitment.



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Because these are days of remembrance. All over the world, we remember and honour the mothers, the fathers, the sons and daughters, the friends and relatives, who were murdered, because of their ethnicity.

We share the pain with those who survived. We pay our respect to those who opposed the genocide, or were killed trying to protect Tutsis.

We will never forget you.

Remembrance also means passing on the memory to the young: those who were not born when the Genocide occurred. Because it will be up to them, not to repeat the failures of the generations before them.

This is also a time for reflection. Long before 1994, the international community had pledged Never again. And yet, we failed to prevent the killings and stop the Genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda. How was it allowed to happen? Why did we not react, when we saw the signs?

The failure of the international community was our collective failure. The UN and the UN Security Council failed Rwanda. The world failed Rwanda.

One of the strongest testimonies of this comes from the general Roméo Dallaire, who at the time lead the UN peacekeeping mission in Rwanda. In one of his books, he wrote that the

“international community, of which the UN is only a symbol, failed to move beyond self-interest for the sake of Rwanda. While most nations agreed that something should be done they all had an excuse why they should not be the ones to do it. As a result, the UN was denied the political will and material means to prevent the tragedy.”

In a time when the rules based international order is being under question, this is even more critical. The Genocide against Tutsi was, in a way, the uttermost consequence of a failure of the international system to act.

Also here, we must invite the young to reflect – on human rights, human dignity, about exclusion, xenophobia and hate speech. Again: it will be up them, to show that history does not inevitably repeat itself.

This is also a day for commitment. To fighting impunity, to the rule of law and to the respect for human rights.

The government has launched a drive for democracy, which I see as part of this commitment. It is about always defending democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It is about strengthening trust in political institutions and societies, defending freedom of expression and fighting for social justice.

All these are basic prerequisites for peace, reconciliation and prosperity. They are necessary for a sustainable development.

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Excellencies,

The journey of Rwanda along this path of remembrance, reflection and commitment over the last 25 years has been remarkable.

Today, Rwanda is a transformed country, thanks to the determination of its people to rebuild society and to pursue national reconciliation. The Rwandans have transformed a legacy of darkness and despair into light and hope for the future.

Sweden's support in this process has been firm. We are a committed partner to Rwanda in the pursuit of accountability for perpetrators and justice for victims of the crimes. We supported the build-up of the Rwandan justice system. We support nationwide peace education for young Rwandans who were not born when the Genocide against Tutsi took place.

Sweden remains the main donor to the Kigali Genocide Memorial, where 250 000 victims are buried.

Our Prime Minister has announced that in 2020, Sweden will organise an international conference on genocide. The starting point is the memory of the Holocaust. The aim is to exchange experiences for safeguarding democracy and for combating racism, discrimination and exclusion. Rwanda's experience will be invaluable.

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We must never forget the one hundred days of hell in Rwanda a quarter century ago. We will unite and renew our efforts to make sure genocide does not happen again. In remembering, reflecting and committing to a better future, we learn from history, and we honour the victims of Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs at “Capturing Technology. Rethinking Arms Control.” in Berlin

Published 18 March 2019

Berlin, 15 March 2019 Check against delivery

Ministers, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you, Foreign Minister Maas, for providing a much-needed platform for discussing global security and emerging technologies, as well as rethinking arms control and nuclear disarmament.

I would also like to thank all of you gathered here today. You are scientists and experts from a broad range of academia and think tanks and it's truly inspiring to see all of this knowledge assembled here today.

Last year the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists announced that the doomsday clock has been adjusted by another 30 seconds. It is now two minutes to midnight. That is its highest alert status since 1953. This was to indicate that the global risk of a nuclear war could no longer be described as some distant dystopia. Reckless political rhetoric of nuclear-weapons use can once again be heard on the international scene.

Disarmament or non-proliferation cannot be achieved without including civil society and the general public.

Unfortunately, today we are seeing a trend towards weakening support for multilateralism and the return of nuclear weapons as a major political issue.

This development has several dimensions that we need to take into account,

including:

- the gradual dismantlement of the nuclear arms control system, which has served the world very well since the end of the Cold War;
- deadlocked multilateral frameworks, which have become victims of entrenched positions and a severe lack of mutual trust;
- the challenges facing the JCPOA, the situation on the Korean peninsula and the current tensions in South Asia;
- development of new capabilities, including low-yield warheads and delivery systems, which risk an increase in global arsenals for the first time since the mid-1980s; and
- irresponsible political rhetoric suggesting the possibility of using nuclear weapons.

Reversing these negative trends will be highly challenging, not least when they are compounded by the technological dimension we are discussing today. Yet – in view of the increasing global security risks – there can be few more urgent tasks.

This is also why Sweden will put non-proliferation and disarmament at the top of our foreign affairs agenda for the coming years.

Let me now turn to four specific topics on today's agenda: missile technology development, lethal autonomous weapons systems, cyber security and biotechnology.

Firstly, I am particularly concerned about the spread of new developments in missile technologies. Ballistic missile programmes are fuelling insecurities in the Middle East and Northeast Asia, and are posing a threat to international peace and security. At the same time, the trend towards the development of hypersonic missiles is creating new and serious security challenges.

As the current Chair, Sweden has facilitated discussions on how to strengthen the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, and I appreciate Germany's engagement on this issue. When debating how to regulate new missile technology, we must also consider how we can promote non-proliferation.

Secondly, on lethal autonomous weapons systems, Sweden is among those countries that have engaged actively in the discussions in Geneva and elsewhere, and I have commissioned a study by the Swedish International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) into the issue.

We do not yet see fully autonomous lethal weapons systems in the armouries of states. However, given the fast pace of technological development, this is a matter that needs to be prioritised.

Important principles include the full applicability of international humanitarian law to all kinds of weapons systems in armed conflict, including any possible future lethal autonomous weapons systems.

I would also like to highlight that states have an obligation under the Geneva Conventions to conduct legal and technical reviews of any new weapon they develop or acquire for their armed forces.

Given where we currently stand on lethal autonomous weapons systems, Sweden sees a great deal of merit in the proposal put forward by Germany and France to develop and adopt a political declaration. It would allow us to state, and commit to, the points and principles on lethal autonomous weapons systems on which we have common understanding.

Thirdly, on cyber security, let me initially stress that cyber security is not only about the defence of states and the resilience of critical infrastructure. It is also about our long term economic development, freedom of speech and information, as well as the security, integrity and rights of individuals. The security-oriented debate must not be misused to undermine the largely positive effects of a global, open and free cyberspace.

However, new technologies, including those with civilian and non-military applications, can create vulnerabilities and threats. Preventing and countering these threats will have to become an integral part of our foreign and security policies.

I am pleased to see the rapid development of policies and instruments at international level, particularly the EU's cyber-diplomatic toolbox and the OSCE confidence-building measures.

Finally, there is arguably no other area of technology where the stakes are as high as in the health sector – both in terms of the enormous potential for benefits to mankind and the terrible consequences of accidents or misuse for nefarious purposes. The pace of development in biotechnology in recent years has only been rivalled by that of computing power.

It is important for us to continue to assess nationally, and at EU and global level, how synthetic biology and related technologies could plausibly be

regulated in ways that enhance our common security.

The multilateral instruments protecting us against misuse include the prohibitions in the Biological Weapons Convention and the strengthened legislation and national controls that states are obligated to introduce under UN Security Council resolution against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, resolution 1540.

However, it is important that these instruments keep pace with relevant advances in biotechnology, and I am therefore particularly pleased that Germany took over Sweden's former role as Vice-Chair of the 1540 Committee at the beginning of this year.

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Ministers, ladies and gentlemen,

Although many of these issues are highly complex and technical, they do share one thing. They are, at their core, political issues, and must be solved politically. Something that Foreign Minister Maas has rightly highlighted here – and in Munich – is that the multilateral system and our own engagement are key to finding the solutions we seek. The negative trend of less cooperation on arms control and disarmament needs to be reversed.

In conclusion, let me return to the topic of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, which is a clear priority for the Swedish Government. We must all cooperate and do our utmost to reach a successful outcome at the NPT Review Conference in 2020. To this end, Sweden has launched a political initiative to pursue an ambitious and realistic approach that can reverse the present negative trend and move us forward.

Our common efforts to strengthen the disarmament regime cannot wait any longer. We must now ask ourselves 'what is the next step?' How can we successfully create platforms between nuclear and non-nuclear states? Who can we mobilise to engage in disarmament and weapons control issues? Do we really have all the verification tools we need?

These are questions that need to be posed at forums such as these and I'm sure today's discussions will deliver to that end.

Foreign Minister Maas,

I sincerely welcome your personal engagement on these issues. I look

forward to working together with you, Foreign Minister Blok and others to defend and promote multilateralism, disarmament and arms control.





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Seminar on Feminist Foreign Policy

Published 08 March 2019

Stockholm, 8 March 2019 Check against delivery

Excellencies, ambassadors, feminists, dear friends,

When our embassy in Islamabad showed the photography exhibition ‘Swedish Dads’, they ignited a societal debate in Pakistan that influenced a decision which makes it possible for state-employed men to take ten days off when they become fathers.

In Shanghai, Buenos Aires and Bogotá, these photographs have been shown in local transport systems.

Johan Bävman’s photographs of Swedish Dads have been shown in 75 countries in total, and led to discussion and debate about gender roles and parenthood all over the world.

In many countries they have inspired local photo exhibitions such as Ugandan Dads, or Papas en Tunisie. The photos outside come from some of these local exhibitions.

I hope you had time to look at and be moved by them, as well as by the exhibition A Tribute for Those Fighting for Women’s Rights that were taken at our Gender Equality Forum last year.

I would also like to welcome everyone again to this commemoration of International Women’s Day, and the launch of a new joint diplomatic

initiative with France on the fight against trafficking for sexual exploitation.

I would like to firstly look back and highlight some of the results of our feminist foreign policy so far, and secondly say a few words about the diplomatic initiative against trafficking for sexual exploitation.

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Our feminist foreign policy works. It inspires others, and it delivers concrete results. I want to say something about what we have achieved over the last four years.

We normally structure our work around three Rs: rights, representation and resources.

Starting with rights, we have had a strong focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights. This has been manifested through the UN, where we are the largest donor to UN Women, and where our core support to UNFPA is estimated to have prevented more than one million unsafe abortions since 2014.

Women's rights is also an important part of our 120 country reports on human rights, democracy and the rule of law that we regularly publish and update.

We have also worked actively to include the rights of women and girls in UN resolutions and statements. One example is our work to include language about sexual and reproductive health and rights in the UN resolution on child and forced marriages.

When it comes to representation, our work for peace has been important. In 2015 we initiated a women mediators network, which has been a model for similar networks on several continents. Our network has 15 members, who have been active in conflicts all over the world, including in Somalia, Colombia, Afghanistan and Yemen.

During our two years in the UN Security Council, we contributed to all peace keeping mandates now including provisions for women, peace and security. We achieved gender equality among the briefers of the Council, and we initiated sexual and gender based violence as a stand-alone criteria for sanctions.

We also launched the campaign Wikigap to increase the representation of

women on Wikipedia. Did you know that four times more articles on Wikipedia are about men than women, and that 90 percent of the editors are men? Last year, we arranged workshops in more than 60 countries, where 1 800 participants created more than 13 000 articles. These articles have been read more than 55 million times.

And there is resources, where we have strengthened the role of gender equality in the development banks, the climate funds and our own development aid. Our support to the World Bank's 'Women, Business and the Law' report has contributed to important statistics about discriminating legislation. We played a crucial role when the WTO adopted its first declaration on gender equality and trade in 2017.

If we combine all the activities and initiatives that the Foreign Service and more than 100 embassies have undertaken, we can count many thousands of concrete measures from our feminist foreign policy.

One important development over these four years has been the shift in culture in our Ministry. I would not say that there was ever a reluctance among our colleagues, but clearly a variation in knowledge and interest. Today all colleagues relate to this policy. Civil servants in Stockholm, diplomats, local staff, administrators. We don't have one ambassador for our feminist foreign policy – we have hundreds.

I have one particularly strong memory, which I believe many of you share with me – our international conference on gender equality in April last year. The conference was a success. Some 800 participants from more than 100 countries participated. It will be followed up in Tunisia in April this year and I look forward to taking part.

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Secondly, I want to say a few words about the diplomatic drive against trafficking and prostitution that we are launching together with France.

Today, the foreign minister of France, Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, and I have agreed to develop a joint strategy for combatting human trafficking for sexual exploitation and prostitution.

The focus of this joint diplomatic drive will be the need to reduce the demand for prostitution, in Europe and globally.

We will do this by promoting legislation of the kind in force Sweden and

France, whereby the purchase – but not selling – of sex is illegal. It has proven to be very efficient in reducing the demand for prostitution, and in helping victims to get out of prostitution.

This will be supported by other measures. It can be bolstered by spreading knowledge about trafficking and prostitution; by stimulating debates and discussion about gender roles and gender equality; by supporting women's shelters and helping victims of trafficking to better lives, and by generously supporting sexual and reproductive health and rights.

We want to pursue this fight against trafficking with others. There are many civil society actors here today that I hope will join us. We also welcome more countries to join this initiative.

Now I look forward to hearing the panel, which will discuss this and other issues further, and I am especially happy to have the Ambassador of France with us on this panel.

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Let me just end by again saying how happy I am to see you all here today. International Women's Day reminds us that our world is in as dire need of gender equality as ever. But our four years of a feminist foreign policy tell us that it is possible to do a lot if we aim high and integrate a gender perspective into everything we do. This gives me hope – and hope is the best possible medicine against any doomsday gloom that we might sometimes feel.

Thank you!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# The Government's Statement of Foreign Policy 2019

Published 13 February 2019 Updated 13 February 2019

On 13 February, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström presented the 2019 Statement of Foreign Policy in the Riksdag. Check against delivery.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sweden's security begins in Europe. EU cooperation gives us peace, stability and growth. It is also crucial in tackling the threat of climate change.

Yet the Europe we know is changing.

We can no longer take for granted that all EU Member States believe in the values that are the foundation of European cooperation.

Nationalists and extremists are challenging political systems across our continent, across the world.

Those of us who have faith in the future must now rally together to fight insecurity.

In a changing world, our task is to pursue a foreign policy that creates security in Sweden and around us.

To do this, foreign policy during this electoral period will have three priorities: the promotion of democracy, shared responsibility for peace and security, and active diplomacy.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

Around the world, democracy is in decline. Today, more people are living in countries with authoritarian tendencies than in countries making democratic progress.

Journalists, elected representatives and human rights defenders are being harassed, persecuted and killed. Agitation and hate are poisoning public debate. Democratic processes are being undermined. Many people are losing confidence in the democratic system as the global elite becomes ever richer and social inequality grows.

In response to these developments, we are now launching a drive for democracy. We will do this together with the Riksdag, and will encourage other countries to join us.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Our democracy drive will be reflected in all areas of our foreign policy. It will involve providing support and sustenance wherever democracy can grow, and expressing criticism when it is eroded.

We will increase our democracy assistance and stand up for democracy's defenders and institutions.

We must involve more young people in the debate on democracy as the best solution to society's problems.

And we will require that all EU Member States respect democracy and the rule of law.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Fully functioning democracy is impossible without human rights, and Sweden has a crucial responsibility to promote these rights.

We will continue to produce country reports on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. We will shortly publish updated reports on 29 European countries.

Persecution of religious minorities occurs in many parts of the world – this is unacceptable. We are strengthening efforts against anti-Semitism, and will organise an international conference on the Holocaust in 2020.

We will protest when freedom of expression is curbed, when journalists are silenced and when human rights defenders and LGBTI people are persecuted.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

There is a connection between growing social inequality and decreasing confidence in democracy. That is why we need more equality and fewer disparities within countries.

The world's resources must be spread in a spirit of solidarity. The goal of Sweden's aid policy is to reduce poverty. While other countries are cutting back, Sweden continues to allocate one per cent of GNI to aid. The focus areas are democracy and human rights, conflict prevention, climate, environment and gender equality. We will continue to build sustainable peace by linking humanitarian aid and long-term development cooperation.

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals can only be achieved through synergies between economic, environmental and social sustainability.

We must improve the social dialogue between states, employers and employee organisations. The International Labour Organisation, which celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2019, is one important actor in this. Now that the OECD has become the home of the Prime Minister's Global Deal initiative, it will be further developed and have an even greater impact. This is how we build fair societies.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

An important part of our democracy drive is to continue our efforts to ensure that women enjoy the same rights, resources and representation as men.

The Government will continue to pursue a feminist foreign policy – wholeheartedly, throughout the world. We see that a growing number of countries are being inspired and are following our lead.

Sweden is a leader when it comes to giving greater attention to women, peace and security in the UN, the EU and the OSCE. Our network of women mediators is being expanded, and similar networks are being created, including in the African Union. They are pursuing conflict resolution in a number of countries.

We will continue our extensive support to sexual and reproductive health and rights, for example by funding initiatives for legal abortions, contraceptives and sex education.

We will work against trafficking in human beings, combat violence against women and share our experience of the Swedish Sexual Purchases Act.

We will promote women's political engagement and economic empowerment.

The Government's international gender equality conference will be followed up in Tunisia this spring, and Sweden will provide organisational assistance.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

Our second priority is shared responsibility for peace and security.

Climate change, nuclear weapons and terrorism know no national borders.

They must therefore be addressed by sharing responsibility for our collective security.

Climate is the defining issue of our time. Science predicts frightening consequences if we do not take action. We are still far from being able to meet the challenge.

Sweden will continue to show leadership in international climate efforts and will be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. We will seek forms of cooperation to tackle climate-related security risks.

The level of ambition in our climate efforts must be raised if the world is to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. Sweden is fulfilling its commitments on international climate financing and is continuing its engagement for the oceans and biodiversity. Through our development assistance, we are investing in renewable energy, energy efficiency and climate-sensitive agriculture. At the 2019 UN Climate Summit in September, Sweden will be proactive in showing the possibilities to combine climate action with economic growth.

Mr/Madam Speaker,



Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves us well and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe. It requires an active, broad and responsible foreign and security policy combined with enhanced defence cooperation – particularly with Finland – and credible national defence capabilities.

Sweden's foreign and security policy builds on cohesion in the EU and increased cooperation on a broad front: in the Nordic region and the Baltic Sea region, in the UN and the OSCE, and through partnership with NATO.

Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or a Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected. We must therefore be able to both give and receive support, civilian as well as military.

Our security is dependent on the European security order being respected, and we will act through the EU, as well as in the OSCE and the Council of Europe, to maintain it.

The transatlantic link is of crucial importance to Europe. We will uphold our bilateral relations with the United States, and cooperate based on values and interests. We regret that the United States has chosen to withdraw from a number of international agreements.

Nordic cooperation is a priority for the Government and will be further strengthened. We will strive for tangible improvements for those of us who live, work and study here, for example by removing more border barriers. This will make our region more secure and sustainable.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The Government's policy towards Russia is based on two tracks:

On the basis of international law, we condemn the Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine, which resulted in more than 10 000 deaths, and the illegal annexation of Crimea. This is a breach of international law and challenges the European security order. We are critical of attacks such as that last year in the town of Salisbury in the UK. We are pushing for the EU sanctions against Russia to be maintained for as long as the reasons for their introduction remain. We support the reform efforts in Ukraine.

At the same time, we – like the EU – have contacts and dialogue with Russia and Russian society. We need to cooperate where we have common

interests. We support Russian civil society and encourage stronger people-to-people contacts. The Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Arctic Council are forums in which we have concrete cooperation.

Arctic issues are important to global security. During the year, Sweden will renew its Arctic Strategy and host the EU's first Arctic forum.

The important Eastern Partnership will celebrate its 10th anniversary this year. We support the participating countries' development towards stable democracies.

Shared responsibility for peace and security also means jointly addressing attempts to create division and instability in our societies. The Government is also working together with other countries to address non-military threats, such as terrorism or those of a cyber or hybrid nature.

Equality and democracy play important roles in building common security. A society characterised by social justice and confidence in its institutions is better equipped to cope with the security challenges of our time.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The European Union is our most important foreign policy arena. A strong and united EU is of crucial importance in a time of uncertainty around the world.

We must strengthen the Common Foreign and Security Policy. We will hone the EU's instruments, including diplomacy, military and civilian crisis interventions, and development assistance and trade. We are contributing to the Permanent Structured Cooperation, which strengthens operational capabilities and effectiveness in the area of defence. We have played a crucial role for the Civilian Common Security and Defence Policy Compact.

The Government will continue to work to ensure that all Member States respect and uphold the EU's common values.

The elections to the European Parliament in May will be important. We need a Europe for fair jobs, a more ambitious climate policy, gender equality and social equality. Inequalities must decrease, and prosperity increase.

It is also important that the EU has a common asylum system that provides legal certainty, is humane and sustainable, and in which all countries take

their responsibility.

We regret the United Kingdom's decision to leave the EU, and are working for an orderly withdrawal. This will provide the best conditions to ensure that the UK's future relationship with Sweden and the EU will be close and trusting.

There must be clear EU prospects for the countries of the Western Balkans, but this requires continued reforms that strengthen the countries' institutions and develop democracy – work that takes time, and which we support.

Developments in Turkey are very worrying. The EU must both cooperate with, and place demands on, Turkey.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Global problems require global solutions. Sweden is a friend of the UN, and sees the need for reform.

On 31 December, Sweden ended its two-year term on the United Nations Security Council, where we were deeply engaged in the world's most serious crises.

In a polarised Security Council, Sweden stood up for international law, human rights, gender equality and humanitarian responsibility. We put the connection between climate and security on the Council's agenda.

At the beginning of our term, Sweden was often a lone voice for women's participation in peace and security efforts. Today, more and more Council members see the necessity of including women and girls to achieve sustainable peace.

The UN's and other international peace operations fulfil an important function in war-torn areas, and Sweden's contribution is appreciated.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

For almost 80 years, humanity has lived under the threat of nuclear weapons. In recent decades, this threat has been limited through various agreements. This has contributed to a safer, more secure world.

Apart from the risk of human error causing a human disaster, we are facing a number of problems:

Firstly, tensions between major powers are increasing now that the United States and Russia have suspended the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty on disarmament following Russian non-compliance. Security in our neighbourhood is deteriorating. The nuclear-weapon states must take joint responsibility and make concrete disarmament commitments.

Secondly, the most central agreement – the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons – is endangered by nuclear-weapon states developing new capabilities and not complying with the agreement to disarm.

Thirdly, North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programmes are a serious threat to international peace and security.

Finally, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, is now at risk. Iran's nuclear weapons capability has been reduced considerably since this deal was signed. The EU is now taking concrete steps to protect the deal.

The inquiry report on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has been circulated for comment.

The Government's objective remains a world free of nuclear weapons. We will therefore start a new initiative and bring together a wide circle of countries in this work for shared responsibility for nuclear disarmament.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

Our third priority is diplomacy. This means that we will seek dialogue and cooperation, even with countries whose values we do not fully share. We will prioritise our participation in multilateral organisations and stand ready to participate in peace processes.

Well-functioning international cooperation is the foundation of a rules-based international order founded on international law.

Sweden is now a venue for talks on disarmament and peaceful conflict resolution on the Korean Peninsula. With persistent diplomatic efforts, and good relations with all parties, we will continue to try to help remove a serious threat.

The political process for peace in Yemen took a decisive step with the

Stockholm Agreement in December 2018. We will continue our engagement. In a few weeks, we will host a humanitarian donor conference in Geneva for the third time. The suffering must be brought to an end.

When the Government launched an action plan for relations with Latin America and the Caribbean during the last electoral period, the trend of democracy-building had been positive for many years. Since then the situation has worsened.

Venezuela is one of the countries where democracy has been eroded over a very long period of time. The situation is desperate. The EU is now taking joint action, together with Latin American countries, to find a peaceful and democratic solution. Sweden is participating in the new contact group.

The Government is working for a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, based on international law. Sweden – like the rest of the EU – sees Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. We have long-standing, friendly engagement with Israel and Palestine. The Government contributes to democratic statebuilding in Palestine. We stand up for Israel's legitimate security needs.

Sweden's broad engagement in Afghanistan will continue, including by strengthening women's participation in peace processes.

Sweden supports the new Iraqi Government's reform efforts. Relations between the country's various ethnic and religious groups, such as Christians, as well as the status of the Kurds, are crucial for long-term peace and stability in Iraq.

Some 13 million people have been displaced in Syria. Sweden has given more than SEK 3 billion in humanitarian support since the outbreak of the war and supports the UN-led process to achieve sustainable peace.

I will never forget the appalling testimonies by Rohingya women on abuses in Myanmar. Sweden is pushing for accountability.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

We are strengthening our partnerships with African countries and with the African Union.

Our work in the Security Council is being followed up in the Horn of Africa. The protracted conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea has been replaced by a

historic peace. The Government has decided to double our development assistance to Somalia, where the situation is vulnerable. We will continue to work for positive developments in the region around the Red Sea. Our broad relations enhance our opportunities to contribute to reconciliation and development.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has undergone a historic transfer of power, but the country's challenges remain. Sweden is working for women's political participation and a strong civil society.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

India is playing an increasing role in the world and is an important partner for Sweden in trade and innovation.

China's stronger international position brings both opportunities and challenges. Trade with China creates both jobs and growth in Sweden. The democracy and human rights situation in China is very serious. The Government is working on developing a new China strategy.

But the winds of protectionism are blowing ever stronger. The trade conflict between the United States and China is a threat to the multilateral trade order.

Diplomacy is also promotion of our trade. Exports increased during the previous electoral period. The Government launched an export strategy that included a number of initiatives to strengthen the business sector's internationalisation and our economic relations with the rest of the world. This strategy will now be developed with a focus on economic, social and ecological sustainability.

Sweden stands up for free and fair trade. We defend the multilateral trade system, of which the WTO is a central part.

The Swedish Foreign Service is handling a number of consular cases. Some of them are politically difficult. Most people are helped in secrecy. We always act with their best interests at heart. The work to help Swedish citizens in distress abroad continues around the clock, every day of the year.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

The worries of the world can sometimes make it seem like doomsday is close at hand.

But the world can be made safer and more secure – with more democracy, more solidarity, more cooperation, more sustainability.

Hope is not a feeling, but a way of acting.

Let's not forget that. Let's fight the doomsday feeling with a policy for hope and faith in the future – in Sweden and in the world.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Hanalys in Hanaholmen, Finland

Published 01 February 2019

(Check against delivery) Excellencies, distinguished guests,

The late Finnish author Tove Jansson once wrote: “All things are so very uncertain, and that’s exactly what makes me feel reassured.” As I begin my fifth year as Minister for Foreign Affairs, I have realised that this is the best way to relate to the surrounding world.

It is always a pleasure to see the beautiful surroundings and familiar faces of Hanaholmen. I am very pleased that my first trip of this electoral period is, as tradition has it, to Finland.

As neighbours and likeminded partners in the European Union, the United Nations and Nordic forums, the Finnish–Swedish relationship is stronger than ever. For small countries like ours, it is particularly important to have close friends. Both Finland and Sweden are militarily non-aligned and highly dependent on foreign trade. We are facing an uncertain and complex global environment that is tilting towards increased isolationism and where international norms and institutions are being called into question.

The Council of Europe has stated that Europe is facing its worst democracy crisis since the Cold War. Democracy will therefore be a focal point of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs during this electoral period.

The trend towards authoritarianism can be seen in our continent. Our open democracies are facing new and unprecedented challenges. Antidemocratic forces are seeking to sow uncertainty and division. In several parts of



Europe, the space for those who seek to hold power to account – civil society and independent media – continues to shrink. Disinformation and propaganda are being employed to effect political change.

In this context, it is crucial to continue working for a socially fair Europe. Social gaps feed into nationalist tendencies and jeopardise unity and cohesion. Sweden will always be a strong voice in defence of democracy.

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We are at the beginning of an important year for the future development of the EU. The European Parliament elections, which will see a new Commission and new leaders in central positions, will have a crucial impact on the EU in 2019.

The leaders of the EU27 will need to continue their discussions on the future of our Union. Sweden will work actively for a Union that defends its fundamental values and is a strong voice for the protection of international norms and cooperation.

With regard to Brexit, the objective of the EU remains an orderly withdrawal. That is without doubt the best basis for a close future relationship.

At the same time, there is a clear risk of a disorderly withdrawal, and we need to be prepared for that too – to be able to deal with the immediate and most serious consequences, not least regarding citizens' rights.

The EU is Sweden's most important foreign and security policy arena. Strong and effective EU cooperation is crucial to our security and our prosperity – both in Sweden and in Europe. But Europe must take greater responsibility for its security. We need a more capable Union, not least for our security and defence policy, and we need a Union that collaborates closely with the UN and NATO.

A more capable Europe will also create better conditions for transatlantic cooperation, which remains central to Europe's security. In line with this, an open and pragmatic approach to third state participation is key to making EU security and defence cooperation as effective as possible.

This is of course also relevant in light of Brexit. We have strategic interests in maintaining close security and defence cooperation between the EU and the UK. The UK is not leaving Europe – it will remain an important partner

for our security.

There is mutual interest in continued UK contributions to EU crisis management operations and cooperation projects, such as on military mobility. This is a question of both our capacity to act, and of sticking together – as much as we can – in a more unpredictable world.

So, the EU must be open to partners. It must also mobilise a broader range of capabilities. This is why Sweden and Finland have championed a ‘civilian PESCO’, which was endorsed by the European Council in December. The Civilian Compact opens up new opportunities for the EU’s ability to act in the field, and we are keen to take this work forward together with our Finnish partners. For instance, we hope that the EU can contribute to the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement with civilian support in Yemen.

We look forward to continuing our close cooperation with Finland in these endeavours. Finland is assuming the EU Presidency at a very important juncture.

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Together with our Nordic friends, we have spoken with one voice on matters related to security in the Baltic Sea Region, enlargement and the Eastern Partnership. Nordic cooperation strengthens the European Union. We also agree on the need to be able to respond to newer, more complex threats. Disinformation campaigns, cyber attacks, acquisition of strategic assets, influence operations, sabotage and so on are all included in the toolbox employed by antagonistic actors to further their interests, exploiting vulnerabilities in our open and democratic societies.

To address hybrid threats, a broader view of resilience is needed, as well as improved coordination within the EU and with NATO. We appreciate the leadership that Finland has shown, including through the establishment of the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats and in the context of the upcoming Finnish EU Presidency. You can count on our cooperation and support.

Climate and Security was a top priority for Sweden as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2017–2018.

The UNSC made considerable progress during these two years and, in several mandate decisions for UN Missions in Africa, has acknowledged the

link between climate change and security. There was also recognition that the UN needs to strengthen its capacity and establish an institutional home to provide climate-related risk analyses and strategies for the UN.

As a first step, we have supported the establishment of a mini-mechanism in the Department for Political Affairs.

The EU is also an important actor in this area. Not only in climate negotiations, but also in addressing climate-related security risks, making climate adaptation support sensitive to conflicts and ensuring that crisis management and peacebuilding efforts are aware of the impact of climate change in a geographical context.

We are working to ensure that the EU tackles the threat of climate change and stands firm on the Paris Agreement.

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Gender equality and women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights are fundamental values of the European Union. But the EU's work on gender equality is under pressure, not least when it comes to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

The EU already has important tools for the promotion of gender equality. These include the EU Gender Action Plan and the comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security.

Globally, gender equality work is being challenged. Therefore, we constantly need to build and develop networks with actors at all levels. The cooperation between Finland and Sweden is fundamental in this work.

United we stand, divided we fall. That's why it is crucial to EU strength and credibility that we can safeguard our common values of freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights. These are the foundations of viable cooperation and mutual trust. Developments in some Member States are worrying. Together with the Commission and other Member States, we must continue our efforts to ensure that all Member States uphold respect for our common values. This endeavour must also extend to our neighbourhood. The continued EU integration of the countries in the Western Balkans, and the welcoming of these countries into our community, is the best way of promoting stability, prosperity and democratic

development in Europe.

Finally, I wish you every success in your important task of leading the European Union in the autumn. We stand ready to assist wherever we can and look forward to continuing our close cooperation.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Holocaust Remembrance Lecture 2019

Published 29 January 2019

(Check against delivery) Your Royal Highness, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends: I want to welcome you all to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and to the 2019 Holocaust Remembrance Lecture.

Let us first take a moment to remember and honour the many victims of the Holocaust, in silence. If you can, please rise. [...]

Thank you – and thank you for coming here and for joining us in showing the absolute necessity of remembering the Holocaust, which remains an unprecedented and atrocious crime against humanity - and a disastrous wound in the history of mankind.

The government of Sweden is committed to the fight against anti-Semitism and all other forms of racism, violent extremism and racially or religiously motivated discrimination and violence. The Prime Minister last week in his Statement of Government Policy named the fight against anti-Semitism a priority area for the government, and spoke of the International Holocaust Remembrance Conference we are hosting in the year 2020.

We have today the opportunity to listen to Professor Deborah Lipstadt give her thoughts on anti-Semitism and incitement to violence and hatred I want to thank her for accepting to come to Stockholm and to speak here.

It was yesterday 74 years since Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated. With Stockholm in a deep winter's freeze, we can barely fathom the last days in this extermination camp. The thought of survivors forced west on death

marches, huddling forward in the snow and sometimes barefoot, shakes us to the core.

The images and the testimonies from Auschwitz and other Nazi concentration camps are gut-wrenching. The world could see with their own eyes the unimaginable horrors of the Holocaust. These crimes were the result of rampant anti-Semitism in Europe in the 1930s and 40s. But of course, the Nazis did not invent anti-Semitism, nor did it go away with the end of World War II. Anti-Semitism draws on millennial-old stereotypes, myths and conspiracy theories – some of which unfortunately remain very much alive today. This must be fought with all our might and with the strongest resolve.

Indeed, we are now witnessing an increase in intolerance and hatred in Europe and the rest of the world – on the internet, in the streets, and around religious institutions. The incidents of violence and attacks against Jewish institutions around the world are too many to mention here. The government of Sweden condemns this violence unequivocally. Intolerance directed at minority groups such as Jews is also a threat to all of us, and to the democratic societies that we have historically fought hard to build.

Jewish life is part of Swedish life, and Jewish culture is an important thread in our European social and cultural fabric.

Everyone living in Sweden should be able to lead a life based on equality, safety and dignity – and without fear or threat when practising one's religion. The right of religious freedom or belief is a human right.

A range of measures are taken to protect Jewish life in Sweden, let me mention just a few of these:

- Education and better knowledge about history and the Holocaust in schools, including financial support to schools for visiting sites of the Holocaust.
- Enhancing security for religious institutions
- The government has recently given increased support to enhance the security of Jewish buildings. As I said earlier, the Prime Minister has also announced that Sweden in the year 2020 will host an international conference on the memory of the Holocaust. This is twenty years after the Stockholm Declaration, the founding document of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

Anti-Semitism is a global problem, and not limited to any national setting or regional context.

For centuries, Jews have been the target of unfair blame, wrongful accusations, senseless hatred and violence – simply because they are Jews. Anti-Semitism has deep and historical roots and it has taken many different forms.

But with the arrival of the internet, new borderless and anonymous environments have been created in which age-old conspiracy theories can take additional forms. Hence it is important to underline that Human Rights are as valid online as offline and shall be promoted, protected and ensured in both contexts.

Fighting anti-Semitism online is a huge challenge for the open and democratic world.

Here, governments need to cooperate with the media industry, civil society and specialists. Large social media companies like Facebook and Twitter carry a responsibility in these matters. Anti-Semitism are not only attacks on Jews but also a fundamental threat to our democracy as it challenges our fundamental human rights.

The EU Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online is an important step, but much remains to be done in terms of monitoring, implementation, accountability and enforcement.

Continued international cooperation is important. The EU, the United Nations and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance are vital in this work. I appointed in 2016 an ambassador for Human rights, Democracy and the Rule of law, who now heads the Swedish delegation to the IHRA. In 2016, I also appointed for the first time a Swedish Special Envoy for inter-religious and intercultural dialogue and to combat anti-Semitism and to protect religious minorities on a global level. Both are with us here today.

Bilateral consultations and cooperation with Israel, the United States and partners in Europe remain a priority.

The ongoing wars around the world, continued terrorist attacks underline all too clearly the need to address the human rights violations and abuses and the root causes of intolerance, hatred, violence and armed conflict.

It is clear that no single country can solve or combat these problems alone.

And it is clear to us that no set of countries or governments can solve these issues without working in close cooperation with civil society organisations.

An active civil society is key in this endeavour; education and dialogue are, without doubt, the most important cornerstones of a peaceful, inclusive and tolerant society.

Again, I want to really thank you for joining us in the conversation today, and with that I want to welcome Professor Deborah Lipstadt to hold the 2019 Holocaust Remembrance Lecture on anti-Semitism.





Speech

# 2019

Published 09 January 2019

**Stockholm, Sweden, 9 January 2019. Check against delivery.**

Vice Chancellor Enmark, Professor Wibben, dear friends,  
Thank you for inviting me to speak today at this inaugural lecture. I know it is not your first time here, but welcome to Stockholm, professor Wibben. And warm congratulations on your appointment. And congratulations to the Swedish Defence University, for receiving a professor with such excellent qualifications in research on security and military studies, international theory, and feminist international relations.

I'm delighted that the idea of an Anna Lindh Professor at the Swedish Defence University has now become a reality. It was an idea that Robert Egnell and I came up with when we sat in my office discussing the best ways to advance the cause of women, peace and security. As many of you already know, one of my highest priorities during the past four years has been to pursue a feminist foreign policy.

I am going to keep this short, as I know that everyone, myself included, is eager to hear Professor Wibben's lecture. However, I would like to say a few words about Anna Lindh and her legacy. I would also like give an example of why I think a feminist foreign policy is so important: namely, the role played by women in the Colombian peace process.

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Anna Lindh was a close friend of mine, and I still miss her immensely following her brutal murder in 2003. Unfortunately, her time in this world was all too short.

Anna once took her young sons with her to New York, where they visited the UN Headquarters. She showed them the General Assembly, they walked in the corridors and looked at art from all over the world, and they went to

the Security Council. Anna's sons really enjoyed the visit and were interested in everything they saw. But they soon noticed that wherever they went there were lots of men in dark suits. Anna's youngest son finally asked: "Are the women arriving later?"

Sometimes it takes a child to speak the truth, and this surely was one of those occasions. "Where are the women?" is a phrase I have used too many times in my political life. The lack of women in everything from decision-making to peace negotiations and economic life is still outrageous, and is something I know inspired much of Anna Lindh's work.

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You are perhaps aware that when the formal peace talks between the Colombian Government and FARC began in Havana, Cuba, in November 2012, only one of the 20 negotiators around the table was a woman. A year later, civil society leaders organised the first-ever National Summit of Women and Peace and out of that summit came a clear demand for an inclusive peace process. Two years later, women made up 20 per cent of the Government's negotiating team and 43 per cent of the FARC delegates.

So, what happened? By organising themselves, these women contributed in crucial ways to the peace-making effort, including by broadening the agenda. Women addressed some of the primary grievances of affected communities, such as land restitution and the right to justice and reparations for victims. Women also negotiated local ceasefires, which improved the local security situation in towns and villages across the country.

Because of demands by women negotiators and civil society, FARC undertook several confidence-building measures, such as an apology process and the release of child soldiers. Finally, women built coalitions and rallied public support in favour of the peace talks. By repairing relations in communities affected by the conflict, women and civil society laid the groundwork for the peace-building efforts necessary for the agreement's long-term success.

The peace agreement in Colombia serves as a model of inclusion. Women were key to its success, and their continued involvement will be key to the implementation of the peace process and to consolidating peace.

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This is just one of the many ways in which gender equality is not just a women's issue – it's a peace and security issue. Again, I am very happy and

proud that Sweden now has an academic centre for women, peace and security studies here at the Swedish Defence University. And I am convinced that this will contribute to advancing gender equality in peace processes and security policy, thus contributing to peace itself.

With that, I give the floor to Professor Annick Wibben.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Margot Wallström at Yemen consultations

Published 13 December 2018

Rimbo, Sweden. 13 December 2018. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, dear Friends,

This is indeed a very special day for Yemen, for the United Nations and for us here in Sweden. I want to say first of all thank you all for travelling to this faraway, snowy place and for your earnest efforts these intense days.

Thank you Secretary General Antonio Guterres for joining us. Thank you Special Envoy Martin Griffiths. But first and foremost thank you to the delegations, the Government of Yemen delegation, led by Foreign Minister Khaled Alyemany and the Ansar Allah delegation, led by Mohammed Abdel Salam.

The support from the international community and the many key states involved has also been crucial. Thank you, Kuwait and Oman, for making these consultations possible.

If you remember when I welcomed you here a week ago, I emphasised the need for concessions, compromises and courage. During these past days, we have indeed been encouraged by your spirit of dialogue and constructive engagement. There is no doubt that this week has required great patience and created some trust.

A week ago, I also mentioned that the world is watching and would have expectations about concrete achievements. I am of course extremely happy to see that we have a Stockholm agreement today with important progress made on Hodeidah and exchange of prisoners as examples.

We also believe that more women mean more peace. I have met the Women's Technical Advisory Group and was impressed by their knowledge and skills. Thank you for the important role that you have played. I trust that more women will participate in upcoming talks. I am also pleased that civil society and other actors have been so engaged during these days.

When you soon leave Rimbo, I want you to know that you have many friends who follow your progress with great interest and engagement. The Yemen crisis requires continuous attention from the international community. Sweden will remain active in our support to the United Nations efforts for peace in Yemen. Next year late February we will co-host a United Nations conference on humanitarian assistance to Yemen for the third time. If further progress has been made - and I allow myself to be hopeful - that occasion could also be about assisting reconstruction.

To the delegations: Never lose sight of why you are here and who you represent. It is the people of Yemen – the men and women and not least the children. They suffer the most from this conflict.

The Yemeni people now want to see results. They want stability, prosperity and peace in their country. I encourage you to continue, as you have been doing here, to engage constructively and in good faith with the United Nations process to pave the way for stability and peace in Yemen. We hope that this positive spirit of Rimbo will prevail.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the IAEA Ministerial Conference

Published 29 November 2018

Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the at the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology: Addressing Current and Emerging Development Challenges, 28 November 2018 in Vienna. Check against delivery.

Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I will now make some remarks in my national capacity.

The state of our globe paints a gloomy picture; instability and conflict are increasingly fueled by climate change, and by lack of food or water. We are all too aware that these threats will increase as the effects of climate change grow. The IAEA makes an important contribution in addressing shared challenges through the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Agency disseminates benefits of nuclear science and technology such as detecting, controlling and preventing the spread of Malaria. By promoting research and capacity-building the IAEA supports Member States application of peaceful nuclear science and technology. This work also constitutes a tangible contribution to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, adding to the Agency's important role as a partner in both peace and development.

Sweden is very happy to have resumed a seat in the IAEA Board of Governors. We have a long-standing tradition of bolstering the Agency's

broad mandate. We provide extrabudgetary support to the Agency for water resource management in the Sahel, addressing ocean acidification and tackling marine plastics. Jointly managing water resources is a good example of an area of technical cooperation that aids in preventing conflict.

Let me take this opportunity to reemphasize the importance Sweden attaches to adopting a gender perspective, including women participation at all levels. I encourage the Agency to continue its mainstreaming work.

We must redouble our efforts for the successful implementation of Agenda 2030. I thank the Agency for arranging this conference which highlights one important part for achieving a sustainable future.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Security Council Briefing on Maintenance of international peace and security: non- proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

Published 26 September 2018

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström,  
Wednesday, 26 September 2018. Check against  
delivery.

Madam President,

After listening to all countries around this table, I hear support that multilateral and diplomatic solutions are urgently needed to address the challenges of today. International peace and security, and preventing conflict and terrorism, are rightly high on our agenda.

I therefore thank you, Madam President, for convening this important meeting on non-proliferation.

Madam President,

We have been asked to comment on four themes in this briefing: sanctions efficiency; capacity to implement; non-state actors; and weapons of mass destruction.

I think that the answer to all of these four issues is close multilateral cooperation.



The world would certainly be a much more dangerous place without the existing treaties and agreements of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Yet, this multilateral framework for non-proliferation and disarmament depends on our continuous commitment to collective solutions.

In many parts of the world, we see modernisation of nuclear weapons arsenals, increased missile capacities, the threat of chemical weapons use and a normalisation of the rhetoric surrounding all weapons of mass destruction. History has shown us too many times that such steps form a pathway to catastrophe.

The nuclear weapons states bear a particular responsibility for upholding and making good on the commitment inherent in the NPT of a nuclear-weapons-free world. To this end, the review conference in 2020 must pave the way for enhanced disarmament and non-proliferation commitments. Equally, Sweden reiterates the call on all States to sign and ratify the CTBT.

Madam President,

The NPT is the common tool towards disarmament and non-proliferation, but let me today also focus on three specific issues: the challenges to the Iran nuclear agreement; the DPRK's development of nuclear weapons; and the recurring use of chemical weapons.

Firstly, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Iran deal, is a historic achievement. It is a concrete example of effective diplomatic non-proliferation efforts. This agreement prevents nuclear proliferation in Iran, but also aims to avoid ripple effects in the region. As the IAEA confirms, Iran continues to fulfil its nuclear obligations under the agreement. As long as that is the case, the JCPOA effectively curtails Iran's ability to develop nuclear weapons.

This is why Sweden, together with the rest of the EU, deeply regrets the United States' unilateral withdrawal from the agreement – a decision with far-reaching consequences that makes our world more unsafe. And frankly, what are the alternatives to this agreement?

In undercutting a concrete multilateral non-proliferation tool, it dangerously undermines our joint non-proliferation efforts elsewhere.

Together with our EU partners, we will try to mitigate the adverse effects of

the US policies. Sweden, and the rest of the EU, will continue to foster broad relations and dialogue with Iran, including on issues such as human rights. Iran's role in the region and missile activities are clearly a matter of concern. These concerns can and should, however, be addressed separately and not at the expense of the JCPOA. Security in the Middle East region can only be achieved through diplomatic solutions and enhanced cooperation, not through further polarisation and isolation.

Remember, we have tried this before; for decades isolation has been tried and it does not work.

Secondly, the DPRK's nuclear weapons programme has been a major threat to the global non-proliferation regime. Recent diplomatic efforts deserve our full and active support. The continued progress in the Inter-Korean Dialogue is very encouraging, and the summit between the United States and the DPRK in Singapore in June was indeed significant. All parties must now work to maintain momentum and take positive steps.

For the DPRK, this means that commitments must be translated into legally binding undertakings. The IAEA should be given a role early in the verification of the denuclearisation and disarmament process.

The Security Council and the international community must continue to stand united.

Thirdly, the use of chemical weapons is a serious violation of international law. Every violation undermines established norms and risks eroding the international taboo on these weapons. This is a very serious and worrisome development. The use of chemical weapons is morally abhorrent and can never be accepted.

In Syria, the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism has confirmed that chemical weapons were used repeatedly by the Syrian Arab Republic and by Da'esh. We supported the decision to task the OPCW to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. While a mechanism established by this Council would have been preferable, the issue was too important to be allowed to be blocked. This does however not free this Council from its responsibility to ensure that those responsible are held to account.

In Salisbury, a targeted murder was attempted using a nerve agent. Such assaults are absolutely unacceptable, and we call on Russia to fully

cooperate with the investigations.

Madam President,

We must never lose sight of why we are making the efforts to eliminate these horrific weapons. Until now we have not talked about the victims. I have myself met with survivors of nuclear weapons attacks, and I will never forget their stories. Victims of chemical weapons have shared similar accounts. It is important to listen to such personal experiences to understand what it is we are fighting for. It has strengthened my resolve to step up efforts for non-proliferation and disarmament.

Weapons of mass destruction are clearly a global threat that we must address together. Only through multilateral solutions, including from this Council, can we effectively prevent the use of these repugnant weapons. The multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament framework is also a key pillar of the international rules-based order. We owe this to the survivors and victims of past attacks, and we owe it to future generations.

Thank you, Madam President.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Managing complexity: Addressing societal security challenges in the Baltic Sea region

Published 12 June 2018

Stockholm, 11 June 2018. Check against delivery.

There is a strip of sea that glimmers grey at the sky's end,  
it has a dark blue wall that looks like land,  
it is there my longing rests, before it flies away home.

The poet Edith Södergran, 1916. Doesn't she capture something that many of us have in common: a slightly melancholic relation to the sea, our sea, the Baltic Sea?

Södergran was born in St Petersburg, lived in a Finnish city which is today part of Russia, spoke German and wrote her poetry in Swedish.

A true Baltic person, active during a time when our continent was torn asunder by tensions. World war, civil wars.

Remembering this is a good backdrop for my address today. Södergran reminds us of how closely linked our countries have always been. And her era reminds us of how fragile stability can be, if we do not cooperate to maintain it.

I will focus in this speech on our common security, and how we can act together to enhance it. After giving my view on the notion of common security, I will mention three points, or rather three levels, where I think we can do more to create security.

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Dear friends,

The security situation in our region is more tense than it has been for a long time. The European security order is threatened, mainly by Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its aggression in Eastern Ukraine. In the Baltic Sea we are seeing more exercises and rearmament. We are also experiencing how activity in the hybrid and cyber domains – such as disinformation, trolls and hacking – pose new challenges for trust and cohesion in our societies.

The Swedish response to this new environment is threefold. We are strengthening our national defence, we are deepening our cooperation with others, and with our military non-alignment as point of departure, we carry out an active diplomacy and security policy.

The notion of security has many dimensions. During this conference, the focus will be on the broader aspects of security: about threats and challenges that don't care about borders or national flags.

These security threats – be they climate change, epidemics or the nuclear threat – affect us all, and we need to act together to face them.

The response that I want to promote is that of common security. Of building security together.

The Baltic Sea region is a good example of cooperation for common security. We have several organisations, including the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Nordic Council, where our countries meet and engage in practical cooperation.

And in times of tension, it is even more important that these organisations function as platforms for dialogue and cooperation.

Now let me point to three areas where I believe that strengthened cooperation between our countries would be beneficial for our common security.

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Firstly, it makes sense to start with the individual. The world is, after all, made up of individuals and peace begins in the minds of people.

People-to-people contacts are the first building block for common security.

When we travel, make friends from other countries, learn new languages and get to know new cultures, we stop looking at others as 'them'. This kind of

understanding between people is a necessary condition for common security.

There is already a great deal of people-to-people exchange in our region. Erasmus programmes and other opportunities for exchange studies in our different countries. Funds for cultural exchange, sports. Both the CBSS and Barents Euro-Arctic Council have a clear youth focus, which I support fully.

I try to do my share: whenever I speak to youngsters in Sweden I say, "learn Russian", "read Icelandic authors", and so on.

But much more can be done. I think that the CBSS and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council should discuss how to promote the movement of young people between the member countries, perhaps even produce an action plan.

I think we should all look at how to make higher education even more accessible to young people in other countries around the Baltic Sea. And I often talk about the idea of creating a youth corps to give young people an opportunity to work as volunteers to meet different needs in society – such as environmental or social issues. Perhaps this could be done in a Baltic Sea states setting?

Secondly, if we zoom out a bit, there is the societal level. I would argue that the stability of our region is linked to the stability of our societies. We must give issues such as social inclusion, welfare, equality and gender equality a place in the discussion about security policy.

When we talk about resilience – isn't an equal society with high trust and low corruption more resilient in the face of any challenge?

Don't such stable and secure societies pose less of a threat to other countries?

There is cooperation on social issues, for instance in the work to fight trafficking and violence against children in the CBSS.

I would like to see more. An increased exchange of knowledge and experience, for instance, when it comes to the design of social security systems, the promotion of gender equality, and the integration of new groups and minorities into society.

Or more exchanges between researchers on welfare politics and security policy.

Thirdly, the planet.

This is where the notion of common security originally belongs. We are destined to live on this planet together. And, once again, we have no choice other than to survive together.

How many of you are grandparents? I became a grandmother a few years ago. And honestly, if I knew I'd like it so much, I would have wanted grandchildren before I had children.

When I became a grandmother, the future became even more important. And no issue is so crucial to the future of my grandchildren, for humankind, as the climate.

We see the changes already. The melting Taiga. The melting ice in the Arctic. How our Sami populations are affected by changing weather conditions. The last few weeks in Sweden have broken all weather records, and although it is hard to complain about a Mediterranean climate in Stockholm, the aftertaste was bitter.

Climate change issues are high on our regional agenda. Work is under way in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council to create climate action plans and reduce environment hot spots. In the Arctic Council, cooperation is under way among researchers. We have done a lot of work on the environment in the Baltic Sea.

But frankly, when it comes to the climate, this fateful issue, we owe it to our children and grandchildren to do all we can to mitigate the changes in temperature and the effects on us. We can only do this together.

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Dear friends,

To make our peoples feel safe and secure is the core task of any government. In all we do, we should ask ourselves – how do we act to maximise our peoples' safety and security?

Safety and security – in Swedish the word 'trygghet' better captures this – reproduce themselves. If my neighbours feel safe and secure, I will be safer. Growing insecurity, on the other hand, creates a downward spiral. Perhaps that is what we are seeing in the world today.

Common security is not a zero sum game. It increases the more we build trust, the more we cooperate, the more safety we build as individuals, as societies, as humankind.

I sincerely hope that this conference will be one step further in achieving this.

Thank you.





Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the European Commission Representation in Paris – ‘What role for the EU in a worrisome world?’

Published 29 May 2018

18 May 2018

I am delighted to be in Paris today.

But I am also pleased in view of our important launch, at the OECD, of the flagship report of the Global Deal for Decent Work and Inclusive Growth. I am happy to note that Sweden and France are strengthening our cooperation to lead the way towards a globalisation that creates more and better jobs and makes inclusive growth a reality.

But this is not the topic of this lecture; instead I will talk to you about the role of the EU in a worrisome world.

Today the threats to our common European Union are everywhere. From populism and radicalism to climate change and inequality. The eight wealthiest people today own as much as 50 per cent of the world population. Multilateralism is threatened as militarism and polarisation dominate the global stage. The EU was constructed for another purpose, it was constructed to show that differences can be resolved in dialogue instead of on the battlefield. This is why we must now show unity, that the European Union is a partner to count on when times are tough, and that it does not shy away from global responsibility.

Critics never hesitate to point to flaws in the EU construction; I think we

would do well to remember that it is remarkable we have come this far. Over the past decades we have joined East and West and showed progress, growth and freedom of movement never thought possible in Europe. And we have only just got started. Sweden strongly believes in the European project – we believe in our ability, as a Union, to overcome divisions and move forward to address common challenges and create a better future for all our citizens.

We know that the strength of our Union lies in its soft power – this is the appeal also to our neighbours. The EU is a problem-solving machinery, a machinery that step-by-step tackles the problems that affect us as individual Member States, but that must be solved collectively as a Union.

Let me give you some brief examples:

The greatest challenge of our time is without doubt climate change. The US announcement to withdraw from the Paris Agreement means that the EU must defend it even more strongly. All our political tools must be used to strengthen its implementation around the world: development cooperation, trade, diplomacy and confidence-building measures.

The migration issue continues to create splits between Member States. We need to act together and in solidarity in the EU to handle the challenges caused by migration flows and to address the root causes. Sweden will continue working for a new asylum system which is sustainable and where all Member States take their share of responsibility.

We need to work for a social Europe for jobs, equality and growth. The Swedish Government is working hard to contribute to a more social Europe. The Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth in Gothenburg in November was a concrete contribution to the efforts to move these issues higher up the EU's agenda.

It is impossible not to mention Brexit, the most dramatic challenge our Union has seen in decades. The negotiations on Brexit have been characterised by unity and cohesion among the EU27. We believe that we all, the EU27 as well as the UK, will benefit from close future EU-UK relations.

At the same time, we see several signs of a positive development in our Union. The European Commission's spring 2018 economic forecast notes that growth rates for the EU reached a 10-year high and that growth is set to remain strong in 2018, while unemployment continues to fall.

Concrete decisions have been taken to improve the everyday lives of our citizens, such as the abolishing of roaming charges. We have negotiated free trade agreements with Canada, Japan and most recently with Mexico.

In this context I would also like to touch upon the worrying development regarding the American tariffs on steel and aluminum, a development that may have systemic consequences for our rules-based trading system. It is important that the EU continues to stand up for free trade and the multilateral trading system.

Our defence of free trade, multilateralism, democracy, human rights and the rule of law is what makes the EU a soft super power. These are the tools we must strengthen to engage with the rest of the world and show that differences are best solved together, in a respectful dialogue, around a table of equals.

I would like to share my views more specifically on three important areas of our cooperation today:

1. strengthening the EU as a security policy actor;
2. addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by developments in the Union's neighbourhood; and
3. developments in the Middle East.

EU cooperation is more important than ever for Europe's security. We face grave and complex security policy challenges – crises to our east and south, a security policy situation in our neighbourhood that has deteriorated, cyber attacks, climate change and terrorism.

Sweden attached a lot of importance to responding quickly and relevantly to the multiple terrorist attacks in Paris during the autumn of 2015, when France requested support in accordance with the solidarity clause.

Therefore, Europe must take greater responsibility for its own security, while maintaining the transatlantic link that remains central to European security. Sweden wants to strengthen the EU as a foreign and security policy actor comprehensively. The EU Global Strategy is our compass for what needs to be done to achieve long-term sustainable security.

I am also proud that Sweden is one of only a few EU Member States that have contributed to all 37 EU CSDP missions so far, both civilian and

military ones. That shows that we have a systemic interest in a strong CSDP.

France is a key partner for us, not least in Africa where our cooperation is long-standing and remains strong today, both in EU missions such as in the Central African Republic or UN missions such as MINUSMA in Mali.

But the EU is so much more than a military actor. Its greatest strength is its broad range of instruments. In my view, the progress made on defence cooperation last year must be followed this year by bold steps to strengthen our civilian crisis management capabilities as well. Look at the situation in Iraq, for example. We have just started a civilian EU mission to help reform the Iraqi police. This is what is needed for the ‘day after’ a conflict.

So, we are eager to deliver a substantial civilian capability development plan to establish how we can reduce the gap between what the EU currently has the ability to do and what a deteriorating security situation requires the EU to do. Already this year, this should be followed by a pact to strengthen civilian common security and defence policy – a kind of civilian PESCO.

Strengthening the EU as a global actor in the pursuit of peace and stability, an actor to be reckoned with, is in the interest of our countries as well as of the EU.

Let me now move on to speak about our neighbourhood. Of central importance to our unity, and to the EU’s strength and credibility as an actor, in our neighbourhood as well as globally, is that we can safeguard our fundamental values. Our common values of freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights are not negotiable, they are the foundation of the EU. They are also a precondition for our credibility vis-à-vis the rest of the world.

It is therefore deeply worrying that developments in some Member States create doubts as to whether our fundamental values are fully shared by all Member States. There must be consequences for this. We support the European Commission’s important work to uphold respect for our common values.

Yesterday, the EU and the Western Balkans met in Sofia at the first summit since the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003. Since then, much has changed in the Western Balkans, as well as in the EU, and our joint commitment to a European future for all Western Balkan countries is perhaps even more important today than it was 15 years ago. If we do not support strengthened

rule of law, democratisation and economic development in the Western Balkans it will come back to haunt us. We believe that a credible EU perspective remains the strongest driver of much-needed reforms and positive change in this region that will benefit us all.

Both our countries see Turkey as an important partner to the EU. Having said that, I am deeply concerned about negative developments, including constraints on freedom of expression, continued arrests and the prolonged state of emergency.

Another concern to us all is Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, together with the ongoing Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine. This is not only a matter of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It also represents a threat to the security order of the whole of Europe.

### Developments in the Middle East

Today, many of the world's greatest threats to peace and stability lie in the Middle East. This is why it is very regrettable and deeply concerning that President Trump has decided to end US participation in the JCPOA. It increases instability within Iran and in an already volatile region. It also poses a threat to the global non-proliferation regime.

Sweden, together with the rest of the EU, continues to fully support the nuclear agreement and its implementation, and will work to preserve the JCPOA despite the US withdrawal. It is key that the EU Member States stand united, speak with one voice and act in a coherent manner.

The Israeli occupation of Palestine, and the way the stalled peace process is handled by the international community, are clear examples of why the EU must stand up for and protect international law. The violent developments in Gaza that we have witnessed over the last week are truly appalling and have rightly been criticised by the international community, including by the EU. These developments show even more clearly the need for all of us to take a clear stand on international law. France's leading role is commendable.

The EU has an important role to play in reviving the Middle East Peace Process. As the largest donor to Palestine, the largest trading partner to Israel, and as a concerned neighbour, the EU can and should play a role. Our two countries are very much like-minded regarding the Middle East Peace Process. I hope we will increase our cooperation even further here.

Increased cooperation is also needed for Syria. Seven years of conflict teaches us that there can be no military solution, contrary to the actions we witness from the Syrian regime and its allies, Russia and Iran. Therefore, the EU together with partners, particularly the US, needs to remain steadfast and engaged in supporting the UN-led political process – the only way to achieve sustainable peace.

This afternoon I will attend the meeting addressing these issues.

As the leading humanitarian donor to this crisis, the EU also needs to continue to press for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2401 – demanding an end to the violence and safe, sustained and unhindered humanitarian access to everyone in need across Syria.

We are living in a worrisome world and it is down to us to defend our basic values. As Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Löfven put it recently: "What unites us as countries of Europe is more than just geography, history and economic cooperation. Our foundation is our common values, our way of life: freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights."

Strong and well-functioning EU cooperation is crucial to our security and our prosperity in Sweden, in France and in Europe. A strong EU acting in support of established international norms, cooperation and institutions is needed, more than ever, on the global scene.

I look forward to continuing close cooperation with France and our other partners in the EU to face our shared responsibility to build an even better and stronger EU.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Address by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development on 7–9 May

Published 16 May 2018

On behalf of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, I am delighted to welcome you all to the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development. I would like to extend a special welcome to Somali Minister of Justice, Hassan Hussein Haji, and Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister, Adela Raz. We are very happy and grateful to have you with us, and to be able to benefit from your valuable knowledge and experience.

It is also a pleasure to see the familiar faces of our many bilateral, multilateral and civil society partners. Thank you for taking part in this event;

I also want to welcome my friend and colleague H.E. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the UN General Assembly. I would like to congratulate you on the very successful High-Level Meeting on Sustaining Peace in New York two weeks ago. Your leadership, together with the reform commitments of the UN General-Secretary António Guterres, is central to addressing the challenges facing the world today. We are looking forward to your keynote address and participation in the panel.

I would also like to thank the competent and professional staff of SIPRI for an important partnership in exploring the linkages between peace and development. We appreciate the thought leadership that you provide, and we look forward to important discussions over the next few days.

How do we make peace? This is a question as old as humanity itself.

Philosophers, politicians and diplomats have asked this question for centuries, yet the answer still eludes us. Perhaps we have been asking the wrong question. Instead of asking how to make peace, we should focus on the building blocks for conflict prevention. That is why this forum is so important.

Together we have the tools. We have the knowledge. We have the will. We also have power to effect change, to change the direction the world is taking. There are many things that need to be done, and I would like to point out three.

First: Address the root causes of conflict

We need to take a serious look at the root causes and drivers of conflict. Economic and social inequality, corruption, gender inequality, lack of access to education and information, lack of respect for human rights, sexual and gender-based violence, cross-border armed groups, refugees, land rights, trade in arms, drugs and minerals, and climate change are some of the often interwoven internal and external causes of conflict.

Addressing root causes and how they affect the population differently creates conditions conducive to peace.

We need more conflict analysis – and with a gender perspective. I recently participated both in the Stockholm Forum for Gender Equality and the High-Level Meeting on Sustaining Peace in New York. It is clear to me that these agendas are interrelated. To address root causes we need to involve the entire the population.

We also need to build on positive experiences of peace and peacebuilding. We need to support research that identifies mechanisms that support peace. We need to work with civil society and local communities. We need to look at what binds communities and societies together. In short, we need to build on what works and seek to understand why it works.

Second: Take steps to create lasting peace.

Violent conflict erupts between communities or countries, or between leaders – not in a vacuum. Conflicts are supported or opposed by different members of communities, countries and parties. It is our duty as an international community to identify those who obstruct and those who support negotiations, peacebuilding and reconciliation, and to strengthen



important actors.

Women's participation is essential to creating lasting peace. New research from European universities supports the idea of a robust relationship between women signatories and the durability of peace. Peace agreements signed by women have a significantly higher rate of success after 10 years, and researchers argue that interaction between women civil society groups and women signatories contributes to better agreements. This, in turn, contributes to longer-lasting peace. Then there is the obvious: making up half of the population, women should be involved in peacebuilding.

I will continue to promote and support inclusive peace processes, through women's mediation networks, support to civil society, international political advocacy, and by promoting the incorporation of a gender perspective.

Third: Use diplomacy.

Sweden is a small country. But small countries can make a big impact. It is important to speak out and stand up for what we believe in. We need to speak with each other instead of at or about each other. To foster conversations – and real listening.

We were proud to host the UN Security Council at Dag Hammarskjöld's farm, Backåkra, in April. We believe that meeting outside our usual meeting rooms brings about new ways of thinking, speaking and interacting.

Or as Dag Hammarskjöld himself put it: "The silence breaks through the armour of the mind."

That is why this SIPRI Forum is so important. A place where women and men of all ages can meet across sectors, experience and agendas. On behalf of the Swedish Government, I wish you forward-looking discussions, interesting panels and enjoyable coffee breaks.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Keynote address by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality, 16 April 2018

Published 18 April 2018

Stockholm, April 16th 2018. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, ministers, parliamentarians, activists, ladies and gentlemen, friends,

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I stand on the sacrifices  
Of a million women before me  
Thinking  
What can I do to make this mountain taller  
So the women after me can see farther...

These are the words of Indian-Canadian poet Rupi Kaur, a young woman with millions of followers.

I thought these lines were suitable for an occasion like this, because in one way, all of you here are the mountain that Rupi writes about. We, our work and our sacrifices are the stones, the cliffs, the rocks, that make that mountain taller, for those who come after us to climb.

It is an honour to stand before you today. For those who arrived this morning, a warm welcome to Stockholm and to the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality.

\* \* \*

Three and a half years ago, we launched our feminist foreign policy. In fact, we invented the feminist foreign policy. We were the first in the world.

The reason was simple. The world would be a better place if women and men enjoyed the same rights, and had the same representation and resources.

It would certainly be a better place to live for half of the world's population: 3.5 billion people.

And if that is not enough to convince some people – it would become a better place for the other 3.5 billion people as well.

Because let's not forget the overwhelming evidence that gender equality is not only fair, but also of benefit to society. It has a positive impact on economic growth, health, education and peace.

So, in one way, gender equality seems to be the simplest thing there is. And at the same time, it can be the hardest thing in the world. Just think of the resistance and reluctance of some of those who would have to share their money, their power, their positions. Or of the excuses when you ask "Where are the women?"

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That was the backdrop of our feminist foreign policy.

I will not go into too much detail about this policy. These three days will be full of information for you. But I would like, once again, to mention our analytical framework. I have spoken about it many times already, but "repetition is the mother of learning", as Aristotle said.

These are the three Rs: rights, representation and resources.

What this means is that anywhere we look, anywhere we work, we start by asking three questions.

Do women have the same **rights** as men? This could concern the right to go to school, the right to open a bank account or the right to marry the person you love.

Are women **represented** in decision-making processes? Are women present when decisions are made that concern them and their future – or in the leadership of international organisations, in governments and parliaments?

Do women get the same **resources** as men do? How do we budget? What and whose interests are served by the way we allocate our resources?

It often starts with another R: **reality check**. What does the situation look like? What are the statistics and facts?

Over time, yet another R has become relevant: results. The Rs seem to be reproducing themselves here...

I would like to take this opportunity to say something about what we have achieved, what I am proud of. The list is long, but here are just a few examples.

Through our policies, we have prevented hundreds of thousands of unsafe abortions in East Africa.

We have taken initiatives against violence, including sexual violence against women.

We have increased women's participation in peace processes and initiated networks of women peace mediators.

We have worked through our embassies to spread our prostitution legislation, which bans the buying – not the selling – of sexual services. The victims of prostitution should not be made criminals. More countries, including France and Ireland, are adopting this principle because of the effects that the law has had, for instance, on reducing the demand for prostitution.

Recently, we ran a global campaign to increase the visibility of women in Wikipedia, where four out of five articles about people are about men. Our initiative has so far generated more than 2 500 new articles about women.

And then there is this conference, which is also an example of our feminist foreign policy in action. I am proud to see people from all over the world establishing new contacts, sharing examples and stories, building friendships.

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My good friend and predecessor Anna Lindh, who tragically lost her life, once shared a funny story with me.

She had taken her sons to the United Nations General Assembly. And during

the meeting, when all the delegates and world leaders were gathered in the hall, her youngest son looked around and asked:

"Where are the girls? Will they come later?"

The clarity with which children see the world...

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I wonder what a child of that age would say about this conference. Not that there aren't any girls here at least!

I spent a long day here yesterday – I don't know what time I got home – chatting to participants from all over the world. Let me just mention a few thoughts that came to my mind.

I think it was Charlotte Isaksson who said, during a panel on women and security, "Just imagine having this discussion 15 or 20 years ago – back then it didn't exist at all". This makes you think. For all the challenges and problems there might be, there has been tremendous progress over the last few decades. Let us remember that, and build on that positive feeling.

Another thing, and I mentioned this yesterday, is that I am more and more convinced of the importance of concreteness. It has become even clearer during my conversations with people at this conference.

We – politicians, activists, academics – must not lose touch with the real world, with the real problems of real people. Let me again highlight the World Bank's report on Women, Business and the Law. Please do read it.

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Excellencies,

I sometimes say that the world is awful and wonderful at the same time.

It is awful because of the limitless cruelty of the human mind. Because of starvation and poverty, war, violence.

Wonderful, because of the limitless empathy that is shown in the hardest of times. Because of those whose belief in what is right makes them defy fear and danger.

And I am confident that history belongs to those who work to make the world a little bit more wonderful.

I am confident that gender equality is one of the defining issues by which future generations will judge our performance as leaders, activists and citizens.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Child Forum at Fryshuset

Published 23 March 2018

Stockholm, 22 March 2018. Check against delivery.

Hello everyone!

What an honour to be with you here today. I'm speaking to all of you children in particular. I have looked forward to hearing about your experiences and ideas. I know that you have been working hard for this Child Forum. It is going to be fantastic to share this day with you.

I would also like to welcome our guests here today: the United Nations Secretary General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba, Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire and, of course, all other participants at this Child Forum.

Children should never have to experience war. Children have every right to be children, to choose their own interests, to go to school, have friends and play. But the world does not look like that. More than 250 million children around the world are affected by war and conflict. The children you just saw in the film are just a few of them. Wars and conflicts also displace many children and their families. Approximately half of all displaced people are children.

Children continue to be used as child soldiers in wars and conflicts. Children can be subjected to sexual violence and can also be deprived of their liberty. We see how schools, hospitals and housing areas are bombed and destroyed. Some of you have perhaps come into contact with war and conflict on the news, some may have your own experiences and others may have parents, friends or neighbours who have fled their homes because of war.

War is a catastrophe for people and societies, and children are often affected worst. This is why we have chosen to work with children and armed conflict in particular.

Sweden has long worked on children's rights, both at home, in the UN and EU. I know that this work can seem very slow, considering how many children are affected. But quite a lot is being done. We are cooperating within the UN, with child rights organisations and with individuals to safeguard rights and increase protection for children.

A positive example is the 120 000 or so child soldiers who have been released. It is important that they are allowed to return to their families and communities, that the children receive the support and help they need to make up for their lost childhood.

In the United Nations Security Council, a special group is working on children and armed conflict. During its time on the Security Council, 2017–2018, Sweden is chair of this group. Last year alone, this working group, under Sweden's leadership, successfully drafted concrete recommendations for five countries in conflict – Colombia, Somalia, Sudan, the Philippines and Nigeria.

Sweden also led a visit of Security Council members to Sudan to discuss how the Government there can best prevent children from being recruited as child soldiers.

We have gathered here today to listen to you. Your thoughts and your experiences are valuable for us and our work here in Sweden, and across the world. For more than a month now, you have learned about what Sweden is doing around the world, in the UN, and about children and armed conflict.

You have had contact with children in war-torn areas. So it is time to listen to your experiences, your needs and your dreams so that we politicians can make the right decisions. You children have a lot of wise words to say to us adults. Your voices must be heard.

You have looked at four areas in which Sweden is working to protect children in armed conflicts:

- work in the UN;
- children's right to have their voices heard;
- children's right to education; and



- children's right to health, including mental health.

And also here at home at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs we are working all the time on the basis of these four areas. In the autumn, Sweden organised children consultations, like the one you have today, in Beirut, Lebanon, and in Bogotá, Colombia. The focus then was refugee children and children in peace negotiations.

I will take your proposals with me to the UN Security Council when I travel to New York in July during the Swedish presidency. But, as you know, it can take time to change the world and we must therefore start by sowing the seeds of change. I like to say that in politics you not only need to have a lot of courage, but quite a lot of patience.

We will continue to fight for children's rights, not least for children who are affected by conflict.

We adults have a responsibility to protect you, so that you can protect us in the future.

Thank you for your kind attention.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at UNRWA conference in Rome

Published 15 March 2018

Speech by Ms Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs, 15 March 2018 in Rome, at the Conference "Preserving dignity and Sharing Responsibility – Mobilizing Collective Action for UNRWA". UNRWA is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

Mr Secretary-General, Guterres  
High Representative Mogherini,  
Minister Shoukry,  
Minister Safadi,  
Commissioner-General Krähenbühl,  
Director-General Da Silva  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have gathered here today because over the last few years, we have witnessed how UNRWA and its vital humanitarian work have been jeopardised time and again due to insufficient funding. We have seen how some countries take great financial responsibility for the organisation while others do not. We are here because this is an organisation we care deeply about and that carries a mission of great importance and that is a lifeline for millions of Palestinian refugees, an organisation that has undergone challenging transformations over the past year in order to enhance efficiency and reduce costs. A work that needs to continue.

This commitment means that the funding of UNRWA is our shared responsibility, both for the countries in the region as well as for the rest of the world. Despite the disappointment of this unprecedented funding crisis, the international community's strong commitment to UNRWA demonstrated in this room today fills me with hope.

I have co-chaired similar meetings on UNRWA's financial situation to ensure that more than half a million children would receive their basic education, to safeguard access to health care for 3.4 million people, and to uphold the rights and dignity of more than 5 million Palestine refugees.

I am deeply concerned about the situation that UNRWA and Palestine refugees are facing today. In the last 70 years we have been witnessing an ever-worsening situation on the ground: the increasing pace of settlement expansion and continued violence and demolitions are destroying the hope of a viable and sustainable two-state solution.

We need to remember that UNRWA is of strategic importance to all of us, exerting a stabilising influence on a region severely affected by conflict and extremism. By providing education, health care, countering hateful propaganda and upholding human dignity.

For those considering the financing of UNRWA too costly I ask of you to consider the costs of doing nothing. Because there are consequences if we fail the young generation of Palestinians. Consequences that could lead to regional instability, security threats and radicalization. We must instead do our part to bring hope to the young generation.

Despite all the efforts of host countries, donors and others, UNRWA is facing an unprecedented shortfall of USD 446 million. This is simply unacceptable. Through the mandate given to UNRWA by the General Assembly, we have all committed to supporting the Agency until a negotiated, lasting and just solution to the Palestine refugee situation is reached.

I am very pleased to see that Sweden is not alone in its long-standing and firm commitment to this goal. I would like to thank Jordan and Egypt for co-chairing this meeting with us. I am also very grateful for the strong commitment and leadership of the Secretary-General, for the support of the High Representative, and to all of you who have come here today.

In response to UNRWA's call for donors to front-load their donations,

Sweden contributed USD 58.5 million in January this year. Finding long-term solutions and predictable and sustainable funding of UNRWA is more important than ever. To help ensure this, Sweden will enter into a multiyear agreement with UNRWA this year.

However, alternative funding solutions alone will not save UNRWA. Commissioner-General, we commend your efforts and hard work to enhance efficiency, but also recognise that more work is required. In this process, you can count on our support.

A sustainable solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, including the final status issues, must be at the core of all our efforts, and will serve to bring new hope to the young generation of the region. Let all of us here today make this collective action for financing UNRWA a success.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at #WikiGapSthlm at KTH Royal Institute of Technology

Published 14 March 2018

Stockholm, 8 March 2018. Check against delivery.

Wikipedia is the world's largest encyclopaedia. It is the website we automatically go to when we need information on virtually any topic.

But there's a problem. Like the rest of the world, Wikipedia is far from gender equal.

There are four times more articles about men than there are about women. Four times.

Nine out of ten articles are written by men.

When women become invisible, whether in politics, the arts, or in science – our area of focus today – the potential of half of the population goes untapped.

This imbalance is not especially surprising – it is simply a reflection of a fact we already know: that everywhere in society women are ignored when it comes to rights, resources, representation, and when it comes to our role in history.

As a woman in politics and diplomacy, I am reminded of this every day. And I am convinced that there is not one woman in this room who has not experienced the same thing.

I believe in concrete action. I believe in overcoming obstacles, not just

talking about them. And I believe that WikiGap – this campaign that we are running all around the world today – is a perfect example of how concrete action can create change in the world.

Look at the map behind me. These are all the countries where we and our embassies today are hosting WikiGap events with Wikimedia and local partners. We can truly say that we are part of something global.

Today in New York, gender equality volunteers are writing about women and leadership. In Colombia, the theme is the role of women in peace processes. In Lusaka, it is the role of women in Zambian society. Zagreb, Moscow, Abu Dhabi. And we are at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, where the focus is on women in technology.

In more than 50 countries, Wikipedia articles are being written about significant women of the past and present.

Wow!

Let me say a few words about how this project began. Last year we organised our first Wikipedia edit-a-thon at our embassy in New Delhi. That marked the start of the global WikiGap initiative we are taking part in today.

For the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, it began with Feminism in India, a digital feminist platform, informing us about a report that found that only three per cent of Indian Wikipedia writers were women. Three per cent.

Feminism in India decided to do something about it and try to reduce this imbalance. It now organises monthly events aimed at increasing both the number of articles about women and the number of women writers and editors. The Swedish Embassy in New Delhi was a co-organiser of the most successful event to date, namely #IndianWomenInScience.

This served to inspire our embassies in Pretoria and Washington, and they have since run similar events. And so here we are today, in 50 more locations.

Just over three years ago, I launched Sweden's feminist foreign policy. The need for such a policy is obvious:

All around the world, women are ignored when it comes to rights, resources and representation.

I would like to touch very briefly on those three words that begin with 'R'.  
Rights.

This can be about something as obvious as the right to resist forced marriage, or the right to education, the right to open a bank account or run a business.

Representation is about ensuring that women have a voice – in board rooms, governments and parliaments. They must be represented where decisions about them and their future are made.

Resources is about how budget funds are allocated. Do they go towards meeting the needs of women and girls?

It is a challenge to transform these abstract ideas into concrete results. But if we don't succeed, we risk losing our relevance.

Our focus has always been on achieving results. In Eastern Africa, we have prevented 745 000 unsafe abortions. We have strengthened women's participation in peace processes and launched networks of women mediators. We have inspired countries to adopt laws that criminalise the purchase – not the sale – of sexual services, and we have trained women political candidates and helped them advance.

And now we have the WikiGap campaign. We will be able to measure, in numbers, what impact it has had, and this impact will instantly become real to anyone using the internet.

In mid-April, I will be hosting a major international gender equality conference: the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality. Its aim is to provide an opportunity for sharing experiences and inspiring civil society and political leaders from all over the world. Our efforts here today will be highlighted at that conference as a practical example of how gender equality can be promoted, and I am sure that many will be inspired to take similar initiatives.

To the students who are here, I would particularly like to say this: the future belongs to you. This entails both an enormous opportunity and a burden. Unfortunately, you will have to deal with all the mistakes that politicians of my generation have made. But you will also be able to shape the world to be the place you want it to be.

There is little evidence that Gandhi actually said, "Be the change you wish to see."

It was most likely a woman. But whoever it was, I believe those words sum up the essence of what we are doing today – here and around the world.

Thank you for being part of this initiative. I wish you the very best of luck – today and in the future.

Thank you!





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the workshop for humanitarian sanctions experts

Published 08 March 2018

Stockholm, 8 March 2018. Check against delivery.

Dear experts, friends,

Welcome to Stockholm and this workshop for humanitarian and international humanitarian law experts of the United Nations sanctions committees' panels.

One year ago, almost to the day, Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp were found brutally murdered in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The loss has been deeply felt. In Sweden, Zaida was important to many people. Before becoming an international civil servant, she had been a youth leader of one of the political parties now in government, the Greens. Indeed, she was always on a mission to change the world for the better; to make it more just, equal and dignified. She was energetic, with contagious enthusiasm and an unwavering commitment to her ideals and service.

The investigation into the murder of Zaida and Michael has not yet been completed. Sweden supports the work of the follow-on mechanism appointed by the Secretary-General to assist Congolese investigative authorities.

I am aware that further international investigation may be necessary. And if so, I will call for it and work to ensure it is carried out. No stone should be left unturned in this work.

This is important not only for the sake of achieving justice for Zaida and

Michael. It also matters because they worked for the UN, as members of a group mandated by the Security Council.

Your safety must be ensured. As an organisation, the UN needs to draw conclusions from what went wrong. The recommendations contained in the report of the UN Board of Inquiry must be followed-up.

I believe that we need a criterion for listing persons and entities that have attacked UN personnel and experts. Sweden took the initiative to include such a specific criterion in the sanctions regimes for the DRC and Mali.

Dear experts, friends,

From my experience as foreign minister as well as a previous SRSG (Special Representative of the Secretary-General) on Sexual Violence in Conflict, I know that sanctions can be an effective tool for peace and security. But there is quite a lot we could do to enhance their effectiveness. Let me examine four aspects.

Firstly, sanctions must be part of a wider strategy.

Acting under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, the Security Council has a range of enforcement options that do not involve the use of armed force. Sanctions come in many forms, in pursuit of a variety of objectives. The Council has applied sanctions to support peaceful transitions, deter non-constitutional changes, constrain terrorism, protect human rights and promote non-proliferation.

However, sanctions do not operate, succeed or fail in a vacuum. Sweden firmly believes that sanctions are most effective when applied as part of a comprehensive strategy – a strategy that also encompasses tools such as political dialogue or mediation and, importantly, addresses the root causes of conflict.

Contrary to the assumption that sanctions are punitive, many regimes are designed to support governments and regions working towards peaceful transition. The Libya and Mali sanctions regimes are examples of this approach.

Secondly, we must ensure fair and clear procedures for both imposing and lifting sanctions. We need to ensure due process in the use of sanctions.

Sweden has long been engaged in this work, both at UN and EU level.

During our current tenure on the Security Council, we seek further improvements to due process.

I would be the first to admit that we face challenges. But there are positive developments to build on, such as the Office of the Ombudsperson.

Thirdly, we need to avoid the possible adverse, indirect impacts of sanctions on the humanitarian situation in the countries concerned or in the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Reports on the reduced ability of humanitarian organisations to respond to humanitarian needs, such as in the case of the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea, are of great concern. Sweden is therefore actively engaged in upholding the humanitarian exemptions.

We hosted a seminar in Brussels in October 2017 with the panel of experts of the 1718 Committee on DPRK. More than a hundred experts from EU Member States and institutions shared information, practices and experiences to improve implementation of the DPRK sanctions regime – which is much needed – without jeopardising humanitarian efforts.

Furthermore, Sweden has successfully worked for a listing criterion in the Mali sanctions regime regarding obstruction of humanitarian assistance.

Fourthly, we must update the scope and objective of sanctions as our understanding of conflicts becomes more sophisticated and comprehensive.

This is particularly evident in terms of the women, peace and security agenda. When applied to the sanctions instrument it has, for instance, led to the introduction of sexual and gender-based violence as a listing criterion.

Sweden called for such a separate listing criterion in the sanctions regime on Central African Republic. We also encouraged the Security Council to request that the SRSG (Special Representative of the Secretary-General) on Sexual Violence in Conflict continue to share information with the sanctions committee on CAR. The Council also requested the inclusion of gender expertise in the corresponding panel of experts.

Dear experts, friends,

Sweden is strongly committed to the work of UN sanctions committees. As an elected member of the Security Council, we chair the sanctions committees on Libya and Mali, and actively participate in all the others.

We are therefore honoured to host this workshop. I wish you two productive days of sharing experiences, lessons learned and key information in the company of renowned Swedish experts on topics such as the investigation of international crimes. We will try to ensure that initiatives such as this will be considered a standard within the UN and encourage other Member States to follow this example. In that vein, similar workshops could be of benefit to you and other experts, and also help with implementation of sanctions.

And lastly: did you think I would forget to mention what day it is? Of course not!

Today is the 8th of March, International Women's Day. We celebrate gains, find strength in each other and resolve to take on the many tasks ahead to achieve gender equality – and indeed make our world more dignified and just. That is what the Swedish feminist foreign policy is all about.

In other words, it provides a good setting for today's discussion.

Once again, welcome!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Remarks at the UN Conference on Disarmament, Geneva

Published 27 February 2018

27 February 2018, Geneva Check against delivery

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, madam President,

Allow me first to thank the Secretary-General for his statement yesterday and for his strong commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation and to the CD. I would also like to thank Under Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her strong engagement and persistence in urging us to make progress. My gratitude also goes to the Ambassador of Sri Lanka Ravinatha Aryasinha for his hard and successful efforts to establish subsidiary bodies of the CD.

Madam President,

As a politician coming of age in the 1980's, I have vivid, chilling memories of the ever-present threat of a possible nuclear Armageddon. The end of the Cold War brought the world back from the brink – for good, it was universally hoped.

Yet, much to my regret, we are currently witnessing a renaissance for nuclear weapons. The doomsday clock of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists was recently adjusted and it is now 2 minutes to midnight. This is a clear indication that risk of nuclear use is rising, either by accident or as result of confrontation. People, civil society organizations and governments are deeply concerned.

Their concerns were clearly expressed by the Secretary-General yesterday. The international situation is challenging. DPRK has been accelerating its nuclear weapons and missile program. The JCPOA, which has our strong support, is going through a challenging time. The same goes for the INF, a treaty of great importance, not least to the European continent. The New

START Treaty is being implemented, which is crucial, but what will happen after 2021? There are indications that the nuclear threshold is being lowered. Meanwhile, enormous resources are devoted to modernizing nuclear arsenals, expanding their lifespan by decades.

The United Nations Security Council has the primary responsibility to uphold international peace and security. As a current member of the Council we take that responsibility with the highest degree of seriousness. The Council shoulders its responsibility in many instances, but is clearly acting below the expectations of the international community when it comes to issues such as disarmament or non-proliferation.

The permanent members of the UN Security Council, also being the five recognized nuclear weapon states, must take the lead in upholding international peace and security.

This responsibility is also clear when it comes to disarmament and non-proliferation. Without constructive engagements and contributions from the nuclear weapon states there will be little progress. It is repeatedly stated that disarmament and disarmament negotiations are not possible in the present security climate. But rather than a pretext for inaction, it should spur us to break new ground. After all, it is in harsher times that efforts to break the dead-lock is most needed and brings the greatest rewards.

Madam President,

2017 was another lost year for multilateral disarmament negotiations in the CD despite the dire need for progress. It is in these times of hardship that we must multiply our efforts and show that the conference on disarmament, as a platform for diplomacy, can achieve results that bring us closer to our common goal of disarmament.

During the past weeks intensive consultations have been conducted under the able leadership of the Ambassador of Sri Lanka. During these consultations we sensed that there was an emerging will, underpinned by a spirit of compromise, to get the CD back on track. That sense proved correct. The CD eventually managed to adopt a decision that paves the way for structured discussions.

Now Sweden has assumed the presidency of the CD. Given the high priority that my government and I personally accord to disarmament and non-proliferation, we will make every effort to continue to make progress. But it

is only possible with the assistance and goodwill of all of you.

Madam President,

Let me outline three main priorities for the Swedish CD Presidency: Firstly, our immediate focus will be to take forward, together with other P6 states, the recent decision to launch structured discussions. To this end, constructive consultations are currently being pursued. I urge members to maintain a flexible approach so that coordinators and schedule for the subsidiary groups can be agreed swiftly, hopefully later this week.

Secondly, Sweden's clear ambition remains to make progress towards agreement on a program of work. We will conduct extensive consultations to this end, in parallel to efforts on operationalizing the working groups and build on the momentum from recent weeks. In this context, let us resolve not to make the perfect the enemy of the good. Historically, the CD has conducted highly meaningful work other than negotiations.

Thirdly, and related to my previous point, we must never lose sight of the fact that the core purpose for which this body was created was to negotiate multilateral disarmament agreements. That should always be our beacon. Over the years, several issues have been put forward as ripe for negotiations, not least a Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty. Another highly relevant issue is negative security assurances, which the NPT Review Conference in 2010 tasked the CD to take on.

Madam President,

To Sweden, as to most members of the CD, NPT is the cornerstone for global disarmament and non-proliferation. The Treaty has been resilient over the years, the number of nuclear weapon states are fewer than once feared and the treaty is with a few exceptions universal. That demands progress in all three pillars. My delegation, and myself, stand ready to contribute with concrete proposals and to work with all delegations committed to progress.

Since last year's meeting of the CD, negotiations took place in another forum, the United Nations, on a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. I see this treaty as a result of several disappointments and frustration in the field of disarmament, not least the failure from the nuclear weapon states to show concrete progress. But we must not let different views on that treaty prevent us from making progress here in the CD and at the NPT Review Conference.

Distinguished colleagues,

There are serious tensions in many parts of the world. Some of them involve states with nuclear capabilities. These states have the main responsibility to reduce tensions and avoid confrontation. But all of us have an obligation to contribute to the best of our ability. Let us make sure that we do our part to move the Doomsday Clock and the world back to safety.

Thank you!





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech in the UN Human Rights Council

Published 27 February 2018

Geneva, 27 February 2018 Check against delivery

Mr. President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, friends,

It is an honor to once again be able to address the Human Rights Council.

A year has passed since I last stood before you at this high-level segment. The world has seen progress on several fronts, yet in other areas things remain the same, not least in terms of the lack of respect for human rights, democratic values and the rule of law.

One grave example of this is the situation in Myanmar. I was deeply moved by the stories I heard from the women in the camps of Bangladesh when I visited them in November. The testimonies of the horrific acts committed in Myanmar are numerous and can only be termed as crimes against humanity.

The people I met had not only been subjected to violence and abuses themselves, they also had to witness the suffering of their children and their family members. All the while, impunity reigned free.

This cannot be accepted. The international community must act to bring those accountable to justice and ensure a safe return for the refugees whose human rights must be respected.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank The High Commissioner, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein for his powerful speech yesterday. Your strong voice for human rights will be missed and I would like to thank you for everything you have done to bring human rights concerns to our attention.

One of the worst humanitarian crisis is of course the ongoing conflict in

Syria. I welcome the adoption of UNSC resolution last Saturday on cessation of hostilities and humanitarian access in Syria. But now the resolution must be fully and immediately implemented. Humanitarian aid must be allowed to help the most vulnerable. All parties, and especially the Syrian regime, must uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Mr. President,

Today I would like to speak on three important topics.

Firstly, the global human rights legal framework was born out of the barbarous acts that outraged the conscience of humanity 70 years ago. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is part of international law. It is also an important milestone for the human family.

The international legal system - founded on human rights, democracy and the rule of law - must constantly be defended. Not least now, when many political leaders question the validity and universality of human rights and of individuals as the sole bearers of rights.

The responsibility to meet these challenges with resolve lies with us all – and the Council must play its rightful role in this regard.

Mr. President.

Secondly, when human rights are challenged, when democracy is under pressure and the rule of law is undermined, we need the most courageous among us: the human rights defenders, trade unionists, journalists, bloggers and media workers, artists and publishers - all who dare to speak up on behalf of those who have no voice. For there can be no democracy without a vibrant and pluralistic civil society.

It is these brave women and men who help us as states live up to our international obligations and ensure that we are held accountable.

Yet impunity for crimes against human rights defenders is mounting, and women are particularly at risk. According to UNESCO, 800 journalists have been murdered in the past decade alone, and 90 per cent of these murders remain unsolved. This impunity is unacceptable.

Sweden will continue to champion all those who defend the universality of human rights and their ability to act free from threats, violence, harassment and reprisals.

Mr. President

Thirdly, human rights are a central element of international law and are essential to the development and maintenance of international peace and security, and sustainable development. The three pillars of the UN are equally important, as there can be neither sustained peace nor true development without the full and equal enjoyment of human rights by all.

In this regard I would like to highlight the need to strengthen the link between Geneva and New York – the Human Rights Council and the Security Council. Human rights violations and abuses are often root causes of conflicts and can act as early warnings of impending disasters.

As Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Elie Wiesel so eloquently put it: "Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must — at that moment — become the centre of the universe." It is precisely because of this that the bodies of the UN must work together, not in parallel isolation.

The Human Rights Council should play an important role in preventing conflicts by adequately addressing situations before they escalate and the Security Council should make better use of the steady stream of information flowing from Geneva and rely more regularly on OHCHR to brief the Council.

Mr. President, finally

The autumn last year was characterized by an unparalleled movement. It can be summed up in two words: me too.

Throughout the world, women are neglected in terms of resources, representation and rights.

This is the simple reason why we are pursuing a feminist foreign policy – with full force, around the world.

Four years have passed since Sweden adopted a feminist foreign policy. Many looked upon this idea with scepticism– as if ensuring the human rights of 50 percent of the population was a controversial concept. And our feminist foreign policy has borne fruit.

Between 2015 and 2016 Sweden increased its development assistance to organizations focusing on women and girl's enjoyment of human rights.

Sweden is now the largest core donor to UN Women. Furthermore, several thousands of midwives receive training each year, enabling millions of women to give birth with the help of trained personnel.

These are no small examples and they are only a handful of the things that my Government has done to advance the entire range of human rights for women and girls.

Seventy years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted it is about time that our daughters, sisters and mothers have the opportunity to enjoy the same human rights as our sons, brothers and fathers.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# The Government's Statement of Foreign Policy 2018

Published 14 February 2018

On 14 February, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström presented the 2018 Statement of Foreign Policy in the Riksdag. Check against delivery.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year marks 100 years since the Riksdag decided to make the right to vote universal and equal for both women and men.

It is a fitting occasion to remember those who give our democracy its lifeblood: those who carry it forward. The people. Politicians and civil servants. Journalists. Civil society. Those of us in this chamber.

I say this because the merchants of gloom are now peddling the view that the coming election campaign is going to be dirty.

I say to them: it doesn't have to be that way. It is entirely up to us.

All of us, in this chamber, can choose to conduct political activities with dignity. We can choose to debate with respect – for each other, and for the truth.

Democracy is at the core of Sweden's foreign policy. Its task is to create security when the rest of the world is troubled. Foreign policy manages the changes that occur all around us:

climate change, which threatens our security,

countries that are isolating themselves from the world,

and people who are displaced.

Our task can be summarised as follows:

The primary goal of Sweden's foreign policy is to protect our country's security and that of our people.

We do this in partnership with others, through an active foreign policy in which diplomacy, dialogue and cooperation are our most important tools. Our commitment to free trade, equality, gender equality and our extensive aid are important parts of this policy.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves us well and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe. It requires an active, broad and responsible foreign and security policy combined with enhanced defence cooperation, particularly with Finland, and credible national defence capabilities.

Sweden's foreign and security policy builds on cohesion in the EU and on increased cooperation on a broad front: in the Nordic region and the Baltic Sea region, in the UN and the OSCE, with NATO and through a strong transatlantic link.

Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected. We must therefore be able to both give and receive support, civilian as well as military.

Our security is dependent on the European security order being respected, and we will act through the EU, as well as in the OSCE and the Council of Europe, to uphold it.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden's security begins in our neighbourhood. Our region must be able to withstand stresses and counter attempts to create division and instability. The Government is working actively to counter such threats, whether they

are from terrorism, or are cyber, hybrid or military threats.

Our relations with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are important. This year, we are marking 100 years since they declared independence.

In 2018, Sweden has a particular responsibility for cooperation between the Baltic Rim countries. We hold the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Chair of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, and we are leading the Nordic foreign policy cooperation and the Nordic-Baltic cooperation. We want to make our region more secure and sustainable, for example through youth exchanges, innovation and digital transformation, climate-smart cities, as well as combating human trafficking.

Russia is participating in several of these formats. Sweden and the EU are seeking dialogue and cooperation with Russia in areas of mutual interest – for example climate change, trade and disaster response operations. Such contacts also contribute to our security.

Russia bears the responsibility for the conflict in eastern Ukraine, which has resulted in more than 10 000 deaths. We condemn the Russian aggression, including the illegal annexation of Crimea. These flagrant violations of international law are the most serious threat to the European security order since the end of the Cold War. The EU's sanctions must be upheld as long as the reasons for their introduction remain. Domestic political developments in Russia are also negative.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

The EU exists for Europe's citizens. If we forget this, we risk losing the people's confidence. Social issues, fair jobs and good working conditions must therefore play a larger role in the EU. This was also the theme of the EU summit in Gothenburg last autumn.

EU cooperation gives us peace, security and growth. Sweden is an active member of the EU and we are concerned over the growing intolerance and declining respect for the rule of law in some Member States.

The EU is our most important foreign policy arena. We are working for an EU that is active in the world – with regard to foreign and security policy, and with a policy for free and fair trade. The EU must have an ambitious

climate policy and stand up for climate agreements that have been entered into. It is also important that the EU has a common asylum system that provides legal certainty, is humane and sustainable, and where all countries take their responsibility.

The Common Security and Defence Policy is now being developed. We are contributing to PESCO, the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation on security and defence, whose aim is to strengthen operational capabilities and effectiveness in the area of defence. Together with Finland and Germany, we are leading the development of the EU's civilian capacity to prevent and manage conflicts.

We regret the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union, and hope it is implemented in an orderly fashion, and that the EU and the UK continue to have a close relationship.

The prospect of EU accession must be clear for the countries of the Western Balkans, but this requires continued reforms – efforts we support. We also support the ambitions of the Eastern Partnership countries to develop closer ties with the EU and implement necessary reforms.

Developments in Turkey, including recurrent conflicts with Kurdish groups, are deeply worrying, as are the attacks in Afrin in northern Syria. The EU must work with, but also put pressure on, Turkey. The EU should not close the door to membership.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

Global challenges require global cooperation. Sweden defends a rules-based international order and we support the UN Secretary-General's reform plans for the United Nations.

Sweden has completed the first year of its two-year membership of the UN Security Council, where we have participated in efforts to prevent war and conflict.

We are making a difference. Right now we are negotiating a resolution on a ceasefire in Syria to continue to ensure humanitarian assistance to the millions of people in need. We have a leading role on issues concerning children in armed conflicts. We have considerably strengthened the UN's work on women, peace and security.



At Sweden's initiative, a unanimous Council condemned the violence against the Rohingya people in Myanmar, and we are working for a solution to the crisis and for those who are guilty of crimes against humanity to be brought to justice.

A burning issue on the Council's agenda is North Korea's nuclear weapons ambitions. The country's nuclear weapons and missile programmes are a serious threat to global peace and security. We are pushing for a peaceful solution and the implementation of the sanctions imposed on the country.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

The Doomsday Clock, which shows the risk of a global catastrophe such as nuclear war, was recently set forward to two minutes to midnight.

Today, almost all nuclear-weapon states are modernising their stockpiles. Concerns remain over the important nuclear deal with Iran. This Government is working on disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons by bridging the divide on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and strengthening its disarmament dimension. We will also move forward with measures for risk reduction and increased transparency.

The nuclear-weapon states, in particular the United States and Russia, have a particular responsibility. It is alarming that the use of tactical nuclear weapons is being discussed as a possibility. We urge them both to negotiate further reductions of nuclear weapons arsenals and comply with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

A new disarmament initiative is the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. An inquiry will examine the consequences of any Swedish signing and ratification.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

The autumn was characterised by an unparalleled movement. It can be summed up in two words: me too.

Throughout the world, women are neglected in terms of resources,

representation and rights.

This is the simple reason why we are pursuing a feminist foreign policy – with full force, around the world.

In Saudi Arabia and Iran, we are educating women to enhance their economic empowerment. In Rwanda, we have initiated a public debate on the role of fathers. Members of our women's mediation network are working with Syria, Afghanistan, Colombia and Ukraine.

Sweden is one of the largest donors in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights, through contraceptives, maternity care and safe abortions. We are working to stop female genital mutilation.

These are some examples of our feminist foreign policy in action. And other countries are following suit.

We are building more alliances, strengthening more women's rights advocates, and improving the lives of more people.

On Wikipedia, there are four times more articles about men than there are about women. On International Women's Day, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and some 50 embassies are hosting edit-a-thons to increase the number of articles about women.

In April, the Government, in cooperation with the Swedish Institute and in dialogue with the Riksdag, is holding the Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality – a major international gender equality conference bringing together grassroots and high-level delegates from around the world. The goal is to share results, learn from each other and inspire political leaders.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

Democracy, human rights and the rule of law are being challenged around the world. This means that people have less influence over their communities and less power to shape their own lives. Security in the world is in decline.

This picture has been confirmed by the 135 country reports published by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs last year on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. These reports provide the basis for our dialogue with the countries concerned. We have also appointed a human rights ambassador and presented a written communication to the Riksdag on these issues.

Sweden stands up to all forms of racism and hate. In our work throughout the world, we support human rights defenders, LGBTI activists, journalists and other people in vulnerable situations. We will never accept attacks based on ethnicity or religion.

Trade union rights are a matter of democracy. The Prime Minister has launched the Global Deal to promote good relations in the labour market. To date, more than 75 actors have joined, including 18 countries. This year we will establish a long-term structure for this work.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden has bilateral relations with almost every country in the world. Through dialogue, both with close friends and with those whose values we do not share, we make Sweden safer.

Relations with the United States are very important for Sweden's foreign and security policy, and for our growth. We will therefore continue to develop them on the basis of common interests and values.

Latin America is making progress. We want to continue strengthening our relations with the countries of the region, and therefore we are now presenting an action plan for cooperation with Latin America.

While the peace processes in Colombia have inspired hope, the situation in Venezuela is very serious.

Developments in Asia are opening up new opportunities. We are increasing political and economic exchange with India and Japan. We are a strong driving force behind the EU trade agenda with Asia and Oceania.

Our relations with China are extensive. The country's role in the world is growing, and with this comes greater responsibility, including protection of human rights.

We are continuing our long-term commitment in a sorely tested Afghanistan. Through our support we are strengthening state- and peacebuilding, and women's participation.

The list of conflicts in the Middle East is long. The suffering they have caused is immeasurable.

We support an inclusive process in Syria for a political solution in which women participate in the negotiations and the decision-making. We are one of the largest humanitarian donors in the Syria crisis.

Sweden is working for reconciliation and stabilisation in Iraq now that Daesh has been defeated. This also applies to relations between Baghdad and the autonomous Kurdish region. We are contributing in the areas of military training, security sector reform and aid.

We are a driving force on the UN Security Council for finding a long-term political solution in Yemen and alleviating the acute humanitarian crisis. Increasing tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran are fuelling instability in the Middle East. Political dialogue between the two countries is needed.

The Government is working for a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, based on international law. In this regard, Sweden – like the rest of the EU – sees Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. We have a long-standing friendly engagement in Palestine. We are contributing to its democratic statebuilding and providing support to refugees through UNRWA. We are a friend to Israel and stand up for its legitimate security needs.

Developments in Africa are multifarious. Some countries are experiencing strong growth. The African Union is being strengthened and regional cooperation is increasing. At the same time, war and humanitarian crises continue to force people to flee.

Conflicts and climate change are worsening the security situation in the Sahel region. Instability is a breeding ground for radicalisation. We believe in cooperation and are participating in UN and EU missions in Mali, supporting the building of the Sahel countries' own security force and increasing aid to the region.

We are seeing positive signs in Somalia, yet at the same time the Horn of Africa is suffering from protracted conflicts and tensions. We are increasing aid and working actively to prevent conflicts and strengthen vulnerable groups.

The transfer of power in Zimbabwe is a historic opportunity. The new government must keep its promises of political and economic reform. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the political and humanitarian crisis is acute. We are working for a peaceful and democratic transfer of

power and are particularly highlighting the importance of women's participation.

Last year, UN experts Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp were murdered while on assignment in DR Congo. We are working tirelessly to ensure that these murders are investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

By promoting sustainable development and poverty reduction, we are promoting security in the world. Sweden will therefore be a leader in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

We are one of few countries that give one per cent of gross national income in aid, and we are working to ensure that more countries reach the UN target of 0.7 per cent of GNI in aid.

Tax revenue is fundamental to building a functioning society. In May the Government will host an international conference on building tax capacity in developing countries.

Climate change has become one of our greatest security challenges. Extreme weather conditions are forcing people to flee, and a lack of natural resources increases the risk of conflict and war. The gap between current commitments and the required emissions reductions under the Paris Agreement is 'alarmingly large', according to research.

Sweden is taking responsibility. We have the world's most ambitious Climate Act and provide major contributions to developing countries' measures on climate, environment and oceans.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden's foreign trade provides us with 1.4 million jobs. Trade contributes to the security of our people.

The benefits of free trade and freedom of movement are at times called into question, and protectionism is on the rise. We are not taking that path. We will stand up for free trade while also promoting social protection and an ambitious environment policy.

Through its export strategy, the Government supports opportunities for Swedish companies to increase exports and reach new markets. We want more good investments in Sweden.

The Government's intention is for Sweden to take part in the World Expo in Dubai in 2020.

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Mr/Madam Speaker,

The staff of the Swedish Foreign Service work tirelessly and around the clock to provide support to Swedes in emergency or crisis situations abroad. Most of them are helped quietly.

We are dealing with some very difficult cases, and some names are well known to everyone in this chamber. We always act in their best interests.

This year we will launch a consular initiative in the area of family conflicts, focusing on child and forced marriage.

A modern Swedish Foreign Service should reflect modern Sweden. We will take further initiatives to ensure that people of different backgrounds are recruited to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

\* \* \*

Mr/Madam Speaker,

On the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, Astrid Lindgren wrote the following in her diary:

...this earth could be a lovely place to live.

Isn't this, in the end, what all people want? To have the security to shape and live their lives.

Let's not settle for less. Let's act with courage and patience. Let's address the world's concerns with a policy for security and confidence in the future. In Sweden and in the world.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech at the MFA Day of International Law

Published 02 February 2018

Stockholm, 1 februari 2018. Check against delivery.

Colleagues, friends,

I would like to wish you welcome to International Law Day at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2018.

I am happy to see so many people here today. This international law day is an annual event. It is an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of international law to Swedish foreign policy. But also to engage with experts in this field – from civil society and academia. It is an opportunity for principle and practice to meet.

This afternoon we have two panels discussing two different topics.

The first topic is Sweden and international law in the UN Security Council. I am happy to welcome a distinguished guest, Dr Helen Durham, Director for International Law and Policy at the International Committee of the Red Cross. Over many years of close cooperation, Dr Durham has helped to shape our thinking and our action in support of international humanitarian law. The work we have done together on a gender perspective on IHL has been particularly important.

The second topic is how protection of medical care can be strengthened in armed conflicts.

The first panel will be held in English and the second in Swedish.

There are many crises and security threats in the world today.

Since the end of the Cold War it has perhaps never been as difficult for the UN Security Council to live up to its task – maintaining international peace and security.

The Security Council is central to the rules-based international system. But this system is increasingly questioned and challenged.

Let me be clear: for Sweden, it is of fundamental importance to protect this system. The rules-based system is essential for the safety of the world, but also for the safety of Sweden.

...

We are now halfway through our two-year membership of the Security Council.

Sweden's tenure on the Council is firmly rooted in the priority we give to international law, human rights, gender equality and a humanitarian perspective.

We have worked hard to establish ourselves as a credible and influential member with a principled stance on international law. Achieving results requires sound and active diplomacy combined with political courage.

I would like to give some examples of how Sweden has stood up for and promoted international law, human rights and gender equality.

My first point concerns the promotion of human rights and international humanitarian law.

The Security Council's mandate is to maintain international peace and security. This mandate must be based on ensuring respect for international law, including IHL, and human rights. This is a cornerstone in achieving peace.

Early warning mechanisms and relevant and independent information from the field are crucial in order for the Security Council to work effectively. This means assessing risks and addressing, preventing and responding to conflicts and threats to international peace and security.

This is why Sweden is working to improve information-sharing between UN bodies and the Security Council. We maintain close contacts with the ICRC and other humanitarian actors to ensure that relevant information on IHL is available to the Council.



Delivering on a priority to integrate international law into Sweden's work on the Security Council means integrating an international law perspective in the Ministry's day-to-day work on Security Council issues. Our international lawyers are part of deliberations on every text and every item on the Security Council agenda.

Let me give you some concrete examples:

One of the best examples of the importance of law in conflict prevention concerns the Gambia.

As President of the Security Council in January 2017, we were extensively involved in the Council's contribution to peaceful developments in the Gambia's post-election crisis one year ago.

The situation was as follows. A newly elected president who was prevented from entering the Gambia, a former president who refused to resign and regional troops on their way in to support the newly elected president. A potentially volatile situation for the Security Council to handle which raised important legal issues, such as the rules governing military intervention and the right to invite foreign forces.

A unanimous Security Council adopted a resolution that expressed support for the democratically elected President as well as full political support for the regional and sub-regional efforts to ensure a peaceful change of power.

A possible outbreak of violence was prevented. One year later, we hardly remember how close the situation came to evolving in the wrong direction.

Yemen is currently the scene of one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. Sweden is working to foster more forceful engagement on the part of the Council to secure humanitarian access and de-escalate the situation.

We were instrumental in formulating a Presidential Statement in June 2017 which demanded that the parties respect international humanitarian law and protect civilians, civilian objects and medical care, and do not recruit or use children as soldiers.

In November, I visited both Myanmar and Bangladesh, where I met some of the members of the Rohingya community who had fled from Myanmar. Many of them now live in an extremely dire and vulnerable situation. The humanitarian situation is acute.

There have been many different descriptions of the atrocities in Myanmar. From Sweden's point of view, I have been clear that the situation gives every indication of crimes against humanity – the violence in Rakhine state is systematic, widespread and coordinated.

In the Security Council, Sweden has initiated several meetings on Myanmar, and we actively contributed to a presidential statement on the situation as well as to establishing that the Council needs to continue to monitor the issue closely.

The violations in Myanmar must be investigated and those responsible must be held accountable. Impunity is not an option.

My second example is Sweden's work on women, peace and security. This is central to Sweden's feminist foreign policy.

UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security states the key role of women in international peace and security.

It has been a top priority for Sweden to advance the role and participation of women in peace and mediation efforts.

Sweden has systematically strengthened the Council's resolutions and statements by including references to women's participation in decision-making. In 2017, all (100%) of presidential statements adopted in crisis situations by the Council made reference to women, peace and security.

We also need to do more to combat sexual and gender-based violence. We must recognise that sexual and gender-based violence in conflict is a security challenge and a threat to development. Sexual violence in conflict is a tactic of war. It is a threat to security and durable peace that requires an operational security and justice response.

In the Security Council, Sweden has contributed to efforts to strengthen the prevention of, and accountability for, sexual and gender-based violence. For example, a separate listing criterion for sexual and gender-based violence was introduced in the Central African Republic sanctions regime last year.

By raising its voice in the Security Council against all kind of sexual exploitation and abuse in a UN context and strongly supporting the Secretary-General in his initiatives to fight such acts, Sweden has also contributed to making the Security Council take a clearer stance against sexual abuses committed by UN staff.

Together with others on the Council, Sweden has also given priority to work on strengthening the protection of civilians and the protection of health care. Here we see violations of the most basic rules of IHL. The ICRC rightly pointed to the use of an ambulance in the horrific attack in Kabul last Saturday as an example of this. Our second panel will focus in more detail on this. This is a priority for us in the coming year.

Turning to an area where the Council faces serious challenges, I would like to comment on accountability, which is my third and final example of the work Sweden is doing. This is perhaps one of the most difficult issues to obtain support for in the Security Council.

The obvious case in point is Syria: so far, systematic violations of humanitarian law and chemical weapons attacks in Syria and Iraq have largely been committed with impunity. As far as Syria is concerned – despite general agreement on the importance of accountability – a number of serious attempts to move forward have been thwarted. This is highly regrettable.

The EU continues to believe that the situation in Syria should be referred to the ICC. Until that is possible, we should prepare the ground for accountability in the future.

While the Security Council has been blocked, we have managed to move forward in other parts of the UN system. The UN Human Rights Council has established a Commission of Inquiry for Syria, and the UN General Assembly has established the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism on International Crimes Committed in Syria.

Information collected by these organs could be used in other states and by international tribunals and courts, as we have seen here in Sweden. A number of individuals have been convicted of war crimes in Swedish courts based on our application of universal jurisdiction.

To conclude:

2018 will be a demanding year: the Korean Peninsula, the Middle East region, the Horn of Africa, the increasingly noticeable effects of climate change – the list is long. But we are addressing these challenges.

We enter our second year on the Council with determination, and with the aim of achieving concrete results. But also for helping the Council to fulfil its mandate to maintain international peace and security. In these troublesome

times it is even more important to protect our global norms and institutions.

When the world becomes insecure, it is not possible to detach and withdraw from the international arena. The Swedish Government will continue its international work for a safer world – based on international law and with more cooperation. This will also make Sweden safer. We continue the struggle for sustainable peace and security in tempestuous times.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Margot Wallström at conference against impunity for the use of chemical weapons

Published 26 January 2018

Paris, 23 January 2018. Check against delivery.

Foreign Minister Le Drian; Director-General Üzümcü; Excellencies; Dear Colleagues,

- Let me begin by thanking you, Minister Le Drian, for taking this timely initiative, and for inviting Sweden to the inaugural meeting of the "International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons". Ensuring accountability for those responsible for serious crimes under international law is a priority for Sweden, not least as a member of the UN Security Council and the OPCW Executive Council, dealing with the issue of chemical weapons.
- This year, we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, the most significant peace treaty of which was signed not far away from where we are sitting today. The end of World War I, and the ensuing ban against the use of chemical weapons in war, raised the hope of an end to the horrors of chemical warfare. This hope seemed born out 75 years later, when Paris stood host to the signing conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
- A farewell to chemical arms should have been one of the achievements to be celebrated as part of the Great War centennial. Sadly, that was not to be. Just when we thought that chemical warfare could be relegated to the history books, its spectre has reared its ugly head once more.
- The UN investigation led by Dr. Åke Sellström following the nerve gas attack at Eastern Ghouta in 2013 precipitated the Syrian accession to the

Chemical Weapons Convention. Since then, however, the Syrian government has been implicated in numerous cases of alleged use of chemical weapons against its own people, including four cases substantiated by the Joint Investigative Mechanism. This includes the horrendous sarin attack at Khan Sheikhoun last April.

- Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to terrorists and other non-state actors has been an international concern for some years, as expressed in UN Security Council resolution 1540. Yet, today we are faced with the very real and serious threat of chemical weapons in the hands of a terrorist group that has demonstrated a total disregard to common decency and a will to commit and encourage atrocities against innocent civilians.

Mr. President,

- So far, chemical weapons attacks in Syria and Iraq have largely been committed with impunity. As far as Syria is concerned – despite general agreement on the importance of accountability – a number of earnest attempts to move forward have been thwarted. The repeated use of veto powers in the UN Security Council to prevent moves towards accountability for chemical weapons use in Syria is highly regrettable.

- The OPCW/UN Joint Investigative Mechanism was a new and innovative tool designed to bring to justice the perpetrators and sponsors behind confirmed chemical weapons attacks in Syria. Sweden was pleased to provide political, technical and financial support to its important work. However, in a highly politicized environment, the Council was not able to act on its reports and ultimately to extend its mandate. Sweden – like several of the countries represented here today - took active parts in efforts to find a way forward that would ensure the extension of the JIM, regrettably to no avail. This, however, cannot be the end of the story. We must intensify our efforts to set up a new mechanism for attribution as more reports from the OPCW Fact-Finding Missions become available.

- Meanwhile, the Human Rights Council Commission of Inquiry and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism on International Crimes Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic are collecting information required once the international community is ready to move forward on accountability. Such reliable and validated information is indispensable, and let me once again welcome the initiative by Minister Le Drian in founding this partnership focused on information exchange and documentation. We trust that this will be an important and useful way to support and complement the multilateral processes. Ultimately, we must learn the lessons

of history and ensure that, 100 years after the end of World War I, there can be no impunity for the use of chemical weapons.

Thank you, Mr. President.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Introductory remarks at the 2018 Holocaust Remembrance Lecture by Margot Wallström

Published 26 January 2018

Stockholm, 26 January 2018. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends:

I want to welcome you all to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and to the 2018 Holocaust Memorial Lecture. Let us first take a moment to remember the many victims, in silence. [...]

Thank you for coming here and for joining us in showing the importance of remembering the Holocaust, which remains an iconic, atrocious crime - and a disastrous wound in the history of mankind.

We have today the opportunity to listen to Professor Yehuda Bauer give his thoughts on the Holocaust, and on one of his most important life-long themes: preventing genocide from ever happening again.

I want to thank Professor Bauer for coming to Stockholm – and for accepting to speak to us. We are all eager to hear your thoughts - and engage in a conversation with you.

This week – and especially tomorrow, on January 27 – we remember the Holocaust more intensely than on other days of the year. January 27 was, as you all know, the day when Auschwitz was liberated in 1945, seventy-three years ago.

The images and the testimonies from Auschwitz and other Nazi concentration camps are gut-wrenching. The world could – and can still - see with their own eyes the unprecedented and unimaginable horrors of the



Holocaust.: a dark period of human kind when Jews, Roma, LGBT-persons and persons with disabilities were victims of genocide, mass murder and persecution.

"Never again" is a phrase that has often been mentioned with reference to the Holocaust, but the collective international delivery on that resolve still must happen. Crimes against humanity did not stop with the Holocaust: as Professor Bauer writes in one of his books, "Genocide is among us". Professor Bauer will speak about the mechanisms causing atrocious mass crimes around the world in the post-World War II-era: from Africa to Asia, the Balkans and beyond. One is forced to realize that in the 73 years since the Holocaust, the world has not learned enough.

The same attitudes, movements, hatred and conspiracy theories that once caused the Holocaust are still visible in the society.

Indeed, we are now witnessing an increase in intolerance and hatred in Sweden, around Europe and the rest of the world – on the internet, in the streets, and around religious institutions. Very recently, we have seen appalling criminal acts against the Synagogue in Göteborg, and continued threats against other religious institutions and individuals. This intolerance is directed at minority groups such as Jews, but it is a threat to all of us, and to the democratic societies that we Europeans have historically fought hard to build.

Sweden is a pluralistic and democratic country – and we are determined to protect these core values of our culture and society. We strive in all fields to create a just, more equal, democratic and peaceful world - where dialogue and exchange of ideas rule, and where war, terrorism, and violence are renounced. The rights of women, minorities and young people need to be strengthened around the world.

Jewish life is part of Swedish life, and Jewish culture is an important thread in our European social and cultural fabric.

Everyone living in Sweden should be able to lead a life based on equality, safety and dignity – and without fear or threat when practising one's peaceful religion. The right of religious freedom and belief is a fundamental human right.

The Swedish government's condemnation of the threats and violence against religious institutions and against people expressing their peaceful belief or

faith is unequivocal and clear: we will not tolerate this.

A range of actions are taken to protect Jewish life in Sweden, with particular focus on education, media literacy, knowledge about history and the Holocaust, and on strengthening democracy, building civil society, enhancing security for religious institutions – to name the most important. The government has recently given increased support to enhance the security of Jewish buildings. Financial support to schools for visiting sites of the Holocaust to educate about this genocide has been allocated.

Moreover, the Government in 2016 adopted a new national plan to combat racism and hate crimes, which also addresses the anti-Semitism that the Jewish community is subjected to.

A year ago, the Prime Minister announced that Sweden in the year 2020 will host an international conference on the memory of the Holocaust. It is important that international cooperation is increased.

Anti-Semitism is a global problem, and not limited to any national setting or regional context.

For centuries, Jews have been the target of unfair blame, wrongful accusations, senseless hatred and violence – simply because they are Jews.

Anti-Semitism has deep and historical roots and it has taken many different forms. The Nazis cannot claim authorship of the anti-Semitism that caused the Holocaust.

This 'hatred of the other' has always had both local and transnational characteristics.

But with the advent of the internet, new borderless environments have been created in which age-old conspiracy theories can take additional forms. It is important to underline that Human Rights are as valid online as they are offline.

Fighting anti-Semitism online is a huge challenge for the open and democratic world.

Here, governments need to cooperate with the media industry, civil society and specialists.

The EU Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online is an

important step, but much remains to be done in terms of monitoring, implementation, accountability and enforcement.

Continued international cooperation is important. The EU, the United Nations and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance are vital in this work. I appointed in 2016 an ambassador for Human rights, who now heads the Swedish delegation to the IHRA. In 2016, I also appointed for the first time a Swedish Special Envoy to combat anti-Semitism and Islamophobia on a global level.

Bilateral consultations and cooperation with Israel, the United States and partners in Europe remain a priority.

Anti-Semitism must also be viewed within a larger context of hate and intolerance, online and offline.

We see how anti-Semitism flourishes in the same environment as violent extremism – in spaces where democratic values are replaced by violence.

The ongoing wars around the world, continued terrorist attacks against cities in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Europe, and the ongoing refugee crisis underline all too clearly the need to address the root causes of intolerance, hatred, violence and armed conflict.

Through international cooperation – in the EU and the United Nations, with education, legal measures, and enhanced security – we must devote our efforts to long-term confidence-building, conflict resolution and a culture of dialogue with respect for human rights in all contexts.

It is clear that no single country can solve or combat these problems alone.

And it is clear to us that no set of countries or governments can solve these issues without working in close cooperation with civil society organisations.

An active civil society is key in this endeavour; education and dialogue are, without doubt, the most important cornerstones of a peaceful and tolerant society.

Again, I want to really thank you for joining us in the conversation today, and with that I want to welcome Professor Yehuda Bauer to the floor to give the 2018 Holocaust Memorial Lecture.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at Folk och Försvar (Society and Defence) Annual National Conference 2018

Published 17 January 2018

Sälen, Sweden, 14 January 2018. Check against delivery.

Your Majesties,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

"When thy next neighbour's house is all on fire,  
'Tis thy concern to make his flames expire."

These are the words of the Roman poet Horace from two thousand years ago. The same applies today, even if the security challenges have become global and much more complex.

Climate change, communicable diseases and water shortages are real threats today in the same way as traditional threats from military conflicts, terrorism and cyber attacks, or the serious threat to our security in the form of nuclear weapons. Our neighbourhood has become global and foreign policy is becoming domestic policy, as we have clearly seen in the war in Syria.

I have been asked to speak about the security policy challenges in a globalised world. This is an important aspect, since broad foreign and security policy is needed more than ever.

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The task for policy, the Government and myself is to protect the safety of citizens. The aim must be for every person to feel secure individually, in their family, and also in their society, their country and the world. Building security together with others is – and has long been – central to Swedish security policy. It characterises our approach both to our neighbourhood and in relation to conflicts in the global arena. Breaking the false logic of confrontation, deterrents and zero-sum games with the aim of creating shared advantages for everyone involved is the essence of common security.

Our deepened bilateral and multilateral cooperation with countries and organisations in our neighbourhood and globally is therefore a linchpin of our security policy. In the EU, cooperation is increasing on a broad front; in the Nordic region and the Baltic Sea region, together with Finland, in the UN and with NATO and via a strengthened transatlantic link. Sweden's voice is also being heard in the OSCE and the Council of Europe when our common security is undermined by the murder of journalists, the manipulation of elections or the erosion of the rule of law.

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The Government is building Sweden's security in all areas. From increased national defence capability to international operations. Our long-term security policy doctrine of non-participation in military alliances is the starting point.

Today, I would like to talk about three areas I believe are central for understanding current security policy global challenges.

1. What are the global challenges?
2. What trends do we foresee?
3. What concrete measures can be taken to tackle them?

### **Global challenges**

For the past few years, we have found ourselves in a very changeable security policy situation. We are seeing this at all levels – global, transatlantic and European, and in our own neighbourhood. You could perhaps say that the post-Cold War era ended in 2014. We still don't have a name for the new era, but many people are talking about a world that is out of balance.

We are in a time of upheaval, when institutions, values and norms that have formed the basis of the rules-based multilateral international order are

questioned or undermined from various quarters.

The path we follow must be based on Sweden's basic, long-term interests and values. Our foreign policy is uncompromising in its defence of the rules-based multilateral order.

It has always been very important for small- and medium-sized countries to have their rights and choices respected. In addition, Sweden is – and will continue to be – an open country, closely connected with the rest of the world in all areas. We therefore also have a great need for a well-functioning international order with clear rules.

The core of the international order is the United Nations Security Council and the United Nations Charter. Sweden acts daily to ensure that the Security Council takes its responsibility for international peace and security, and the UN Charter is upheld.

The 70 years that the UN has been in existence unfortunately show how time and again these rules have been ignored and have in many cases even failed in their purpose. But a world without rules, based on the right of the strongest, would have been much less secure.

Sweden is now halfway through its two-year term on the Security Council.

Since beginning our work in January 2017, we have established Sweden as a credible and influential member. Achieving results requires sensitive and active diplomacy, combined with political courage.

We stand up for our values, international law, human rights, gender equality and a humanitarian perspective.

The Government's work on the Security Council for the prevention of conflict is of the utmost importance for our own security. Local crises quickly escalate into regional conflicts and risk ending in intractable wars between both states and non-state warring parties.

This is something that in our globalised world can also have consequences for Swedish security in the form of increased risk of terrorist attacks.

In our neighbourhood, we are seeing the Russian actions in Ukraine challenging the European security order in a way that we have not seen since it was established 25 years ago.

Even though Ukraine is no longer a member of the UN Security Council, Sweden will act to keep Ukraine on the Security Council agenda. A discussion is now under way concerning a possible UN peacekeeping

operation in Ukraine. This is something that Ukraine has also requested. Such a mission must restore Ukraine's territorial sovereignty and operate throughout the conflict area, including the border with Russia. Should this succeed, it would be a crucial step towards a political solution.

Instability in the Middle East is another clear example. The most discussed conflict has been Syria, where the repeated use of vetoes has obstructed the road to a diplomatic solution.

In Yemen, the humanitarian situation is still very serious and millions of people are now entirely dependent on humanitarian aid to survive. Sweden has been pushing for humanitarian resolutions to be adopted in the Security Council on both Yemen and Syria.

The situation of the Rohingya people in Myanmar is beyond appalling. The scale and systematic nature of the abuses we have seen reported show that they may constitute crimes against humanity. Therefore, the Security Council's continued involvement in the situation is crucial, which Sweden has repeatedly highlighted.

In all three of these examples, Sweden has actively pushed to improve access for the UN and humanitarian organisations and demanded that international law must be respected.

But Sweden's contribution to peace and security extends beyond the Security Council and permeates all international cooperation.

Take global warming, the greatest long-term threat to humanity's survival: Sweden has an ambitious goal of becoming one of the world's first fossil-free welfare nations and we are providing the most aid per capita to developing countries via multilateral climate funds.

Take poverty reduction: Sweden is one of the countries that gives most to development cooperation. We are world leaders in humanitarian aid, which mitigates the effects of war, conflicts and crises.

Take international crisis management: Sweden makes a key troop contribution to the UN mission in Mali. We show solidarity by participating in the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. We are one of the few countries that have contributed to all of the EU's crisis management operations. Sweden is world-leading in civilian crisis management.

Take trade: within the EU and globally, Sweden is one for the strongest

advocates of defending free trade. History shows the risks that a vicious circle of protectionist and isolationist measures also have on international peace and security.

Take the Government's initiative for a feminist foreign policy. Research shows that gender-equal societies are more peaceful. During Sweden's first year on the Security Council, women were mentioned in all Security Council statements on crisis situations; the corresponding figure for 2016 was 69 per cent.

Here I would also like to remind you of the Anna Lindh professorship that is to be set up at the Swedish Defence University this year; a professorship to conduct research into the role of women in conflicts and peace processes, a much-neglected field.

Furthermore, North Korea's illegal nuclear weapons programme is probably the most serious threat to global security. Sanctions against the country have been tightened via a series of resolutions.

Sweden is now emphasising that all UN members must take their responsibility and implement the sanctions. But sanctions are not enough; diplomatic contacts must be employed to achieve a peaceful solution.

The crisis on the Korean peninsula and our continued support for the nuclear deal with Iran – but also other developments around the world – demonstrate the necessity of concrete progress on the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The risk of nuclear weapons actually being used is currently assessed as greater than it has been for a very long time. Passivity is not an option.

The crucial challenge will be to end the polarisation that characterises international cooperation on these issues. This requires strong and determined political engagement.

One primary task will be to strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its role as the central framework in this area ahead of the important review conference in 2020.

To make the review conference a success, Sweden wants to immediately push for negotiations that produce results. Therefore we will take initiatives to counteract the prevailing polarisation on disarmament.

Together with both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states, we



intend to actively contribute to proposals that support the NPT and nuclear disarmament. Risk reduction, transparency, disarmament of tactical nuclear weapons and negative security assurance are particularly important issues.

We will fully utilise all the multilateral forums available to us, including the UN Security Council, the IAEA and the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

I would like to reiterate what the Prime Minister said in his speech. We must never lose focus of the goal of a world free from these terrible weapons of mass destruction. All options must be explored in this work, and we are not afraid of taking the lead.

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All of this is part of a whole. It is an investment in conflict prevention and, ultimately, our own security. And it is an investment in upholding and developing the international order we are so dependent on.

The alternative is a development towards an 'I'm all right, Jack' system – everyone is out for themselves and the right of the strongest applies. This would be a dystopian scenario both for security in our part of the world and for global developments.

For this reason, we will never bend in our defence of the rules-based international order and the European security order, whose core is every country's right to independently make its own security policy choices – a right we defend for our own and other's sake.

### **What trends do we foresee?**

For Sweden, an EU that acts resolutely in the area of security policy, stands together and takes joint action on the basis of mutual solidarity and shared values is indispensable.

This is something we should never take for granted. Last year, the foundations were shaken following the Brexit vote and ahead of the Dutch and French elections.

We have to be honest and admit that Europe's challenges are far from over; the threats to EU cohesion are very real.

But the EU has also strengthened our security in recent years in crucial ways. For example through the negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme – and by upholding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that was

negotiated.

By leading the historic dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo and preventing a conflict that threatened to break out in Macedonia last year. Through its united and clear response to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and destabilisation of eastern Ukraine.

Europe must take greater responsibility for its own security. The Government wants to continue strengthening the EU as a foreign and security policy actor on a broad front. The EU Global Strategy is the compass for this. We must be at the core of the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

Sweden will therefore actively contribute to the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in the area of defence. PESCO will make it easier for the EU to achieve a higher level of ambition in external crisis management.

Essentially, this is about strengthening the EU's freedom of action and credibility in the area of security policy. It is important that the EU has the actual capability to implement all of the measures we say we can, and for which we see a security-policy need.

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It is equally important to strengthen the EU's civilian capabilities to prevent and address conflicts. It must be the role of the EU to be a world leader in peacebuilding.

No other actor will be able to take on this responsibility. Sweden is leading these efforts together with Finland and Germany. There are five areas where I would like to see clear progress in 2018.

First: the EU's rapid response ability must be further strengthened. Sweden is prepared to put at the EU's disposal a specialist team of civilian capabilities from throughout the judicial chain.

Second: Sweden is prepared this year, through the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, to begin providing a strategic stock of necessary materiel and equipment that will get new missions off to a quick start.

Third: a substantial civilian capability development plan to establish how we can reduce the gap between what the EU currently has the ability to do and what a deteriorating security situation requires the EU to do. Already this

year, this should be followed by a pact to strengthen civilian common security and defence policy – a kind of civilian PESCO.

Fourth: over the course of the year we want to expand the EU's civilian stabilisation force in Iraq, which came about as a result of a Swedish initiative to support the country now that Daesh has been militarily defeated. The mission will continue to work in close cooperation with the UN.

Fifth: enhanced cooperation with partner countries. It is of strategic importance that the EU and the United Kingdom continue to maintain close and deep cooperation in the area of security and defence policy in future. But I also see new opportunities to strengthen cooperation with other partners, such as Norway and the countries in the Eastern Partnership.

This is necessary if the EU is to be an international actor to be reckoned with – which is in Sweden's security policy interest.

### **Concrete examples of confidence-building measures**

As a final area, I would like to talk about the importance of confidence-building missions and measures to build security.

One of Sweden's national security interests is to promote stability and security in our neighbourhood. Upholding the European security order protects the basic principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty, as well as independent security policy choices.

Through confidence-building measures for greater transparency and predictability, we help reduce the risk of military conflicts. We also help to improve the conditions for constructive dialogue between countries and organisations.

The OSCE's broad security concept, in which democracy, human rights and the rule of law are integral elements, is crucial in this regard.

During the preparations for the combined-arms exercise Aurora 2017, we informed both the OSCE and NATO about the exercise. We issued an invitation for voluntary inspection in accordance with the Vienna Document to all coastal states around the Baltic, including Russia.

A third example is that we have provided additional resources for 2018 for peace and security-building in our neighbourhood and in Europe.

In 2017, Sweden took over the Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. These are

arenas where we maintain continuous contact and dialogue with Russia and where concrete cooperation projects are implemented. This regional cooperation – which also includes Russia – helps to build confidence. It strengthens the ties between countries and peoples in the Baltic Sea region and thus contributes to stability and security in a broad sense. This people-to-people contact is important.

Sweden will also chair N5 and NB8 in 2018. These are important supplements to other cooperation, such as the UN, EU, OSCE and NATO.

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Ladies and gentlemen,

To return to my starting point – it certainly is our concern when our neighbour's house is on fire.

As our world becomes less secure, isolating ourselves or withdrawing from the international arena is not the way to go. The Government will continue its international efforts to achieve a more secure world.

We are doing this on the UN Security Council, where our second year of membership has just begun; we are doing it with a stronger foreign policy together with the EU; we are doing it in our clear policy for conflict prevention – we are doing it through more, not less, cooperation.

This is what ultimately strengthens Sweden's security.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Remarks at UN Security Council meeting on North Korea

Published 15 December 2017

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs, New York, 15 December 2017. Check against delivery.

Mr President,

The situation on the Korean Peninsula is the greatest threat to international peace and security facing the world today. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programme, illustrates a blatant disregard for its international obligations. The DPRK has repeatedly violated international law, including numerous Security Council resolutions. Its actions are also contrary to the existing global norm against nuclear testing, embodied in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and global non-proliferation norms.

This Council has repeatedly been called together this year to address the illegal testing of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles by the DPRK. At each meeting, Council members have unanimously condemned these provocations in the strongest terms.

The world does not accept the DPRK's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes, and it is essential that we continue to stand united.

Mr. President,

I would like to thank you for convening today's important meeting. I particularly welcome the presence of the representatives of the Republic of Korea and of the DPRK here today. Let this meeting be a step towards dialogue.

I want to take this opportunity to convey the following five messages to the

DPRK;

First, cease all provocations;

Second, engage in a credible and meaningful dialogue;

Third, abide by the Security Council's resolutions and fulfil your international obligations;

Fourth, abandon your nuclear weapons and missile programme in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner; and

Fifth, return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the IAEA safeguards.

Mr President,

The adoption of resolution 2375 earlier this year toughened the targeted sanctions against the DPRK. It now constitutes the most rigorous sanctions regime ever enforced under the United Nations system.

For these sanctions to have the desired effect, it is critical that we urgently ensure their universal and comprehensive implementation. To this end, we need additional capacity at all levels, including improved monitoring and targeted capacity-building. We are actively engaged, through the European Union, in support of such efforts.

This week, the Council has held discussions on both the acute human rights situation and the precarious humanitarian conditions in the DPRK. The humanitarian situation for ordinary North Koreans remains of serious concern. The responsibility for the wellbeing of the North Korean people falls, without doubt, on the Government of the DPRK.

At the same time, it is of utmost importance that the humanitarian exemptions provided for under the sanctions regime are upheld. Reports that international humanitarian organisations' ability to provide assistance has been reduced, therefore, need to be addressed. As the Secretary General has pointed out, there is also an urgent need for more funding towards life-saving humanitarian assistance in the DPRK.

Mr President,

Over the last year, tensions on the Korean Peninsula have continued to rise.

They have now reached a very dangerous level. Provocations have been accompanied by an increase in confrontational rhetoric. In this environment, the potential for mistakes, misunderstandings and miscalculations is high.

In parallel to effectively implementing the sanctions regime, we must undertake further work to reduce tensions, in order to advance the prospects for a comprehensive settlement. Sanctions alone will not resolve the current situation. Intensified and creative diplomatic efforts that pave the way for a peaceful, diplomatic and political solution are urgently needed.

The situation must be approached without prejudice, and we must be prepared to consider both new and previous proposals and agreements. In this regard, there is also a need to explore the possibilities for regional security cooperation and arrangements. Sweden is contributing to these diplomatic efforts. We welcome Under Secretary-General Feltman's recent visit to the DPRK.

Mr President,

This Council has the responsibility to uphold peace and security. There is no military solution to the crisis on the Korean Peninsula. We have to exhaust every avenue for diplomacy and dialogue. Efforts are urgent. The consequences of failure would be disastrous.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech at seminar on climate change and security

Published 08 December 2017

## 8 December 2017 Check against delivery

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Climate change is one of the greatest threats to global security. Climate change knows no borders and it presents an existential challenge to us all.

An important security effect of climate change is an increase in the frequency of extreme weather events – floods and storms principally. This affects the infrastructures of towns and cities, access to drinking water and other resources to support daily life. It also drives the displacement of populations and since 2008, an average of 26,4 million people per year have been displaced from their homes by disasters brought on by natural hazards. 85 % of those weather related. This is equivalent to approximately one person displaced every second.

That is why it is so important that we met here today and speak on this crucial topic.

I will speak to you why we see climate change as a matter of international peace and security, and as such why we believe this should be on the table of the security council. Let me also take this opportunity to thank Stockholm Resilience Centre and SIPRI for co-organizing this seminar.

The scale of the climate challenges we face today and in the future is by now evident. The adverse effects of climate change have the potential to undermine the development gains of the last many decades, and they threaten the prospects for achieving Agenda 2030 and the sustainable development goals.



Talking about the development goals quickly turns into long term challenges. But this is no future development, it is a reality of the present. It is livelihoods and food security being threatened due to changing weather patterns, making people more vulnerable to recruitment by terrorist groups. It is a young girl now forced to walk even further to collect water for her family, missing school and being more exposed to sexual violence.. It is crop being lost and famine spreading, resulting in forced migration that causes human suffering and increased tension between people. It is changing water flows in some of the largest rivers, affecting the water supply for millions of people and increasing competition over already scarce resources.

As such, deteriorating climate conditions is a definite threat to international peace and security. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Security Council first ministerial debate on climate-related security issues. Today, this agenda is more urgent than ever.

In 2017 we have continued to witness undeniable examples of climate-related security risks. Recurring drought in the Horn of Africa, the Lake Chad region and in Yemen is contributing to insecurity and conflict. The conflicts and the droughts amplify one another, and have resulted in famines at a scale not seen in many years. Rising sea levels are threatening the very existence of people and countries, not least the Pacific Island States.

Friends,

The relationship between climate change and security is complex. Melting glaciers, floods in coastal areas, hurricanes, drought and desertification as a consequence of climate change, is increasingly affecting all of us, and can trigger unrest or exacerbate already existing social tensions. Climate related resource scarcity, such as lack of water or food, combined with inequality and shifting demographics also provide fertile grounds for conflict. The countries most affected are those already vulnerable, already ridden by conflict and severe poverty, where governance is weak and institutional capacity to deal with shocks and crisis is low.

Let me in this context also emphasize the critical importance of applying a gender perspective. Women are often among those hardest hit but also critical agents of positive change.

One thing is clear: in order for the international community to make informed decisions when it comes to preventing conflict and sustaining peace, we need better understanding of these links and improved

assessments of the risks already at play.

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Let me share with you a specific example. A couple of weeks ago I visited Bangladesh. The main purpose was to look into the situation for the hundreds of thousands of people who have fled from Myanmar, but the visit also reminded me of the fact that Bangladesh is one of the most exposed countries to climate change, due to geographic and demographic reasons. Bangladesh is a country where extreme poverty still is prevalent and where one third of the country is projected to be under water within only a few years.

Around half a million people per year are estimated to migrate internally – the adverse effects of climate change being one of the main reasons. Add to this the influx of refugees from Myanmar in recent months, which have put additional pressure on an already exposed environment. I have no doubt the international community needs better assessments of this and similar situations in order to respond as effectively as possible, taking into account all factors that are at play.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Mitigating climate change and its negative security consequences is a key priority for the Swedish government, including during our term in the Security Council.

Improved governance and increased attention to climate related security risks is urgently needed. There is no doubt that the UN should take a leading role in this regard. We have been very clear on this.

However, there is currently an institutional gap in the UN system when it comes to addressing the risks of instability, insecurity and conflict arising from the interaction of climate change and social, economic and political factors. This must change. For the UN to be truly fit for purpose, with conflict prevention at the centre of its efforts, the UN needs to have the capacity to manage climate-related security risks.

It is as such a matter of UN reform: to successfully build a stronger UN that delivers sustainable development and peace for the future, reform efforts must take a climate changed world into account.

Disruptive consequences of climate change will inevitably end up on the

table of the Secretary General and the Security Council –our experiences from this year has already proven this.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Lake Chad Basin region – and which I mentioned earlier in my speech - presents a case in point. The impact of climate change on human livelihoods and security is apparent and widespread. This was also recognized by the Security Council during its visit to the region earlier this year.

In its subsequent resolution, the Security Council emphasized the need for adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies by the UN relating to climate change impacts – an initiative by Sweden to move climate issues to the security council's table.

However, in the follow-up report on the resolution to the Council, analysis on climate-related security risks was lacking. This is clear evidence of the urgent need to strengthen the UN's ability within this field. Let us view this as an opportunity to move this agenda forward.

Let me stress a few points where concrete action are needed:

1. First of all, we need an institutional home for these issues within the UN system. There simply needs to be a function responsible for pulling together information, developing risk assessments and reporting on climate-related security risks to decision making bodies of the UN, including the Security Council. We have been advocating for this on several occasions, and more voices have been added to this call.
2. Secondly, we need to improve our awareness of climate-related security risks. This means both increasing our understanding but also making better use of the knowledge that already exists. Enhanced reporting from the field on the link between climate change and security would make a big difference.

This is about delivering on the call of the Lake Chad Resolution: i.e. improving risk assessments and risk management strategies. The knowledge that exists is currently not informing the Security Council in a systematic manner. This must change. Adequate risk assessments are a prerequisite for adequate response strategies. In this regard, we have suggested that a network of academic and research institutions could provide analysis to the UN. I would very much welcome to hear the thoughts on this from the

experts here today.

3. Thirdly, we need to make risk assessments much more integrated and strategic, taking into account how climate and environmental risks interact with social, political, demographic and economic factors. This is part and parcel of the sustaining peace agenda. We need to apply interdisciplinary approaches and move away from methods where we analyze and manage risks in siloes.

Identifying risks is crucial when talking about security issues related to climate change, I would like to mention the Global challenge annual report 2017 that identifies factors that affect risks:

- The human release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, mainly through carbon dioxide from burning of fossil fuels.
- The damages to ecosystems that store large amounts of carbon, particularly forests and coastal marine ecosystems.
- Our own capacity to curb global emissions and coordinate efforts to reduce emissions. Driven by our understanding of tipping points and increasing the sense of urgency among politicians and the public.
- And finally, knowledge, the knowledge of how our actions influence the climate which in turn affects our ability to resilience.

Ladies and gentlemen,

With one year left at the table of the Security Council, Sweden will continue to advocate for the urgency of this agenda and for the need to strengthen the UN's capacity in this regard. We stand ready to support this, both financially and politically. And we believe others would be willing to follow.

Let me end by pointing to the Secretary General's Climate Summit in September 2019: this summit offers a pivotal moment to bring real change to how we address climate-related security risks. This topic can and should be on the summit's agenda, and the foundations for this should be laid now.

As Secretary General Guterres has said himself: "We are dealing with scientific facts, not politics. And the facts are clear. Climate change is a direct threat in itself and a multiplier of many other threats."

I very much look forward to hearing the panelists and experts here today, and hope that our discussion will be part of continued efforts to strengthen our joint focus on this critical agenda.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Remarks at OSCE ministerial meeting

Published 08 December 2017

Vienna, Austria, 7 December 2017 Check against delivery

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks to Austria for your efforts and your great hospitality. Sweden aligns itself with the EU statement.

Dear colleagues and friends.

Why are we here today? Do we have the same answer to the question of why we sit around the same table? My understanding is that it is because we believe that a rules-based security order is something that we build together. In Helsinki, Paris and onwards, we agreed to uphold a set of fundamental principles. We have agreed that there can be no security between states without respect for human rights within states. We have agreed to hold each other to account in order to uphold and maintain these principles.

Today, we see severe challenges to what we have agreed: The deteriorating situation for human rights in the region. The protracted conflicts in Georgia, Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh. And not least: Russia's aggression against Ukraine, its illegal annexation of Crimea and its direct involvement in destabilizing military activities in Eastern Ukraine. Hearing Crimean Tatars share their experiences this morning underlines the urgency.

As a member of the UN Security Council, Sweden would welcome a viable UN mission contributing to restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity and with a continuous presence along the state border between Ukraine and Russia. We are working with partners and allies to see if and how this could be achieved.

The strength of this organization lies in our commonly agreed principles and commitments from Helsinki and Paris and onwards. The OSCE must remain the guardian of these principles.

Of course, we have to do more to ensure that we increase the level of transparency and predictability in the politico-military field. We have to ensure implementation and modernization of our instruments and we welcome the structured dialogue. That is how we develop our work.

In no other region of the world has security cooperation reached the same level as in the OSCE. Therefore, we must safeguard the European security order.

We cannot continue to accept that a few participating States block important decisions which could take us forward.

Security is not a zero-sum game and the rules-based order can only function when everyone adheres to the rules. It is my firm belief that if you want peace, you must prepare for peace.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech at the Foreign Trade University, Hanoi, Vietnam

Published 22 November 2017

Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, 22 November 2017. Check against delivery.

Vice-Chancellor, students, ladies and gentlemen,

"... a world that has yet to be imagined."

I was struck by this beautiful wording in the FTU's mission statement. And it is you – all of you here – and those who have gone before you, and those who will come after you, who are responsible for creating that world.

It is an honour for me to be here today and to have been given this opportunity to speak to you. One of the most enjoyable and enriching parts of my job as Minister for Foreign Affairs is meeting young people from all around the globe and all walks of life. I would like to hear about the hopes, dreams and ambitions you nurture, and the challenges you face.

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you about Sweden's feminist foreign policy. But allow me, first of all, to say a few words about the long-standing relationship between Sweden and Vietnam.

Sweden was the first western country to establish diplomatic relations with Vietnam. This was in 1969, and since then we have been supporting and engaging with Vietnam, not least through development cooperation programmes that have helped Vietnam build hospitals and much-needed industries, and introduce various reforms in fields such as research, law, health, economics and human rights. Vietnam has made huge and rapid progress over the last 30 years, and bilateral development cooperation has come to an end.

Today we are partners, and our friendship is strong. Like all good friends, we need to visit each other from time to time, and I am looking forward to interesting meetings here in Hanoi.

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A few days ago, I witnessed the horrific consequences of the world's failure to prevent yet another humanitarian and human rights crisis. I am referring to the situation in Rakhine State in Myanmar and the refugee crisis in Bangladesh, to where more than 620 000 Rohingya refugees have fled. I have heard shocking first-hand accounts of systematic and widespread violence and abuse, and sexual and gender-based violence. The scale of human suffering is immense.

The international community must condemn the acts of violence, not least by the Myanmar military, and should continue to play a strong, generous and impartial role to support the national efforts required to help Rakhine move forward. I have in my meetings here stressed the need for ASEAN countries to use their influence to address this multidimensional crisis.

Sweden is strongly committed to human rights principles and values that all nations have agreed to adhere to in the UN. There will always be values that we consider universal and indisputable: democracy, the rule of law and freedom of opinion and expression.

Increased respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law would also mean much greater freedom and a stronger position for women – and ultimately for the whole of society. Abolishing all the legislation in the world that discriminates against women and girls would not only increase freedom but have major positive economic impacts.

The importance of improving social, economic and other conditions to achieve true gender equality is an additional factor.

At a time when the multilateral rules-based international order is under threat, every effort must be made to safeguard it and to tackle global challenges together.

Sweden's commitment to multilateral cooperation and our staunch defence of international law are rooted in the realisation that our own security depends on this rules-based international order, where the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states, both large and small, are respected globally.



Safeguarding the principles of free trade and the multilateral trading system is crucial to global economic development. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. It facilitates free and open trade, includes well-established rights to freedom of navigation and overflight, and supports the peaceful resolution of maritime disputes. Sweden welcomes the ongoing talks on a Code of Conduct (CoC) between ASEAN and China, and hopes for a swift implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the East Sea.

In our own region, we must not forget the conflict in Ukraine, Russia's aggression and violations of international law. Sweden and the EU underscore the importance of the Minsk agreements and reiterate our support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, and call upon Russia to do likewise.

Joint efforts to fulfil and speed up the implementation of the Paris Agreement are crucial. Climate change threatens to put prosperity out of reach for millions of people, roll back decades of growth and development, and make it impossible to end extreme poverty worldwide by 2030. The world's most poor and vulnerable people will be hardest hit by the impacts of climate change. Climate change adaptation is key in development support.

Meanwhile, never before have we had better know-how, solutions and technology to create opportunities for low-carbon development. There is an energy revolution under way, especially in developing countries, and opportunities abound for leap-frogging – for example, by using off-grid renewable solutions.

Let me turn now to Sweden's feminist foreign policy.

I will start with the policy's four pillars. They will be easy for you to remember, as they all start with the letter 'R'. I call them the '4 Rs': realities, rights, representation and resources.

First, reality means getting the facts right from the outset. And it is important to be concrete. What do the statistics say? What do we want to do and how should we prioritise? For example: if we want peace agreements to take women into account, let us find out how common this is. The answer is that 18 per cent of peace agreements between 1990 and 2014 made reference to women and gender equality. Perhaps, more women peace negotiators could make a difference? Well, statistics say that only 9 per cent of negotiators

were women in the 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011.

This is how we have to work to gain a correct understanding of reality: carefully, methodically and patiently.

Next is rights. Human rights are also women's rights. Here, we can talk about positive and negative rights. Positive rights are areas where the aim is progress, for example equal rights to inheritance and access to education, employment and health. Negative rights concern areas where we aim for prohibition, such as domestic violence, forced marriages and gender-based discrimination.

Then there is representation. Here we talk about participation in decision-making processes. It starts with a simple question: who has the power to create policy? Research shows that when it comes to which policies are pursued, gender matters. For this reason, women's underrepresentation in influential positions, in all areas of society, is a major cause for concern. And if we look at the statistics at global level, we will not find them uplifting. In national parliaments, for instance, less than 25 per cent of parliamentarians are women.

I am proud that half of the ministers in the government I represent are women. And my workplace, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, is quite exceptional: all three ministers, and three out of four State Secretaries, are women.

The final 'R' is resources. Who gets the resources? Who do we give support to? In our development cooperation, we apply a gender perspective when distributing aid. One example: today, only one per cent of spending in security sector reform is given to initiatives where gender equality is a significant objective. This is unacceptable.

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The results then? What have we achieved over the last three years?

Since we launched our feminist foreign policy, tens of countries have introduced laws and proposals to strengthen gender equality.

We have established a network of women mediators, and we have increased the participation of women in peace processes in Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

We have pushed for the implementation of gender equality strategies at

development banks and environment and climate funds.

We have ensured that a gender perspective has been incorporated into development agendas, and we have helped to give hundreds of thousands of women and girls access to safe abortions.

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Those are not easy issues but I believe we all can do something to make a difference.

We can – and we should.

To all of you who are still thinking about how to shape your personal future, and the future of your country, I say this: if you believe something is unfair, do something about it. Be bold and be patient. Don't give up!

I would like to end with a poem by Vietnamese poet Hoang Thi Y Nhi, who two years ago won the Swedish literary Cikada Prize.

"How can we tell  
what's ahead of us – the sea, forest, valley or swamp.

But regardless we've got to  
go to the end of the road we have chosen.  
Even if it takes the walk  
of an artist on a cable strung over a vast empty space

Balance  
balance  
pay attention to balance"

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, at IDEA's launch of The Global State of Democracy report

Published 15 November 2017 Updated 15 November 2017

15 November 2017 Check against delivery.

Mr. Secretary General, colleagues, distinguished guests, friends of democracy,

I'm delighted to see so many people gathered here to discuss the challenges that democracy is facing today, but also the opportunities it presents.

Democracy continues to be the only alternative when it comes to giving all individuals the opportunity to influence the society they live in, as well as their own lives.

Let me therefore begin by underlining the paramount importance of democracy in Sweden's foreign policy. Democracy, human rights and the rule of law make up a very strong entity that are mutually reinforcing, and dependent on each other.

But we must remember that democracy is not something that can be exported, it can only be supported. Democracy is a complex affair. It must include a combination of electoral principles, deliberative and participatory components, liberal rights and not least a reasonable level of equality. Only when these perspectives work together can democracy truly flourish,

This shows that democratic rights are also duties, citizens must engage and participate in civil society, media, debates, demonstrations and so on. Democracy can never grow in a society where you only contribute by voting

every four or five years.

Today I wish to speak to you on democracy from three different perspectives:

1. The Swedish human rights reports and the trend of shrinking space
2. The necessity of women and youth in democracies
3. The European Union and growing populism

...

The reports on human rights, democracy and the rule of law on 135 countries, that the ministry of foreign affairs published earlier this year, show the dynamics behind democratic backsliding. These reports have been published before but for the first time they also include a democracy component.

In these reports we see a clear trend where a growing number of states limit the space available to civil society in various ways.

This is worrying since a vibrant and pluralistic civil society and a free media are essential for democracy.

Governments are increasingly persecuting organisations and individuals fighting for their freedoms of expression, assembly and opinion.

In some traditionally democratic countries too, we have seen backsliding from democratic governance and the space for civil society decrease. Not the least we see this among the European union members states where young - but until now stable - democracies are showing authoritarian tendencies.

According to the global civil society alliance, CIVICUS, ratings for October 2017, only two percent of the world's population today live in a country with a completely open civic space.

Having a strong civil society is the foundation of all functioning democracies and we can see how shrinking space often coincides with a declining democracy. This can be seen in a range of countries such as Cambodia, Turkey, Poland or Venezuela.

Sweden continues to be in the forefront of fighting the causes of shrinking

space. We work in the UN Security Council, the UN Human Rights Council and other UN agencies. The EU is an important player in promoting human rights issues around the world, but also among member states.

...

An area of positive but slow development is women's rights.

Sweden has over the last three years had a feminist foreign policy with the aim to promote women as actors in all spheres of society. This includes increasing women's political representation and empowerment.

As pointed out in the Global State of Democracy report, at current rates of progress, political equality between men and women will not be achieved until 2060.

That is totally unacceptable.

Madeleine Albright has once said that "development without democracy is improbable. Democracy without women is impossible."

I could not agree more.

Gender equality is a fundamental matter of human rights, democracy and social justice. But overwhelming evidence shows that it is also a precondition for sustainable growth, welfare, peace and security. Societies where women are not thriving will not prosper.

The youth continues to be under-represented in most elected parliaments. Even though many countries have a young population they still fail in representation. This is worrisome and risks creating a gap between aging politicians, that does not take sustainable decisions for future generations, and young frustrated voters that are not represented.

I think new initiatives are necessary to guarantee youth representation. I myself come from a political party that decided to set a goal of 25 % under 35 years of age at all election lists for our latest election. I think ideas like these need to be encouraged and more widely used.

....

Let me raise my third and final point. Democracy in the EU is under attack from populism.

An increasing number of people today are losing confidence in conventional politics and are questioning the value of democracy.

The rise of populism, disinformation and racism we are seeing today, not least here in Europe, will test democracy's resilience in the coming years.

We need to focus our attention to prevent further backsliding and work even harder to show the benefits of living in open free societies where democracy reigns. In this regard, we must show that democracy does not only voice the opinion of a few but guarantees decisions promoting economic growth and equal opportunities for the larger public.

Many people may rarely voice their political views but are counting on democratically elected politicians to deliver an effective government and rule of law. Decreasing inequality is essential to regain support for politicians and fighting populism, it is also one of the global development goals and thus a globally recognized priority.

The European Union has an important role to play in this regard and should lead with example.

...

Working for continuous dialogue on democracy is important in preventing it from backsliding. Today's event organised by IDEA is an excellent example and contribution to that end.

IDEA's Global State of Democracy and its indices is an instrument that will be a valuable tool for policy makers, civil society and individuals engaged in democratic development across the globe.

Therefore I would like to take this opportunity to convey my warmest congratulations to all the staff at International IDEA for producing a thorough, timely and relevant publication.

As anti-democratic forces gain foothold around the world, closer cooperation between governments, international organisations and civil society will form the basis of our defence.

Lastly, this Monday, Sweden qualified for next year's World cup in football,

but in contrast to football, democracy is not a spectator sport. It needs everyone's participation and I encourage each and everyone in this room, and beyond, to join the game.

Thank you for listening.





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech at debate in the UN Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict

Published 31 October 2017

Margot Wallström, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, New York, 31 October 2017. Check against delivery.

Mr President,

Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for their important briefings to the Council this morning. I also want to thank the Secretary-General for his Annual Report. We particularly welcome the focus in this year's report on protection and prevention. I also commend the Secretary-General and the Special Representative for their enhanced engagement with the concerned parties.

I would like to pay particular tribute today to Mubin Shaikh for sharing his inspiring story with the Council. It makes a difference to listen to the voices of those who have lived the issues we are discussing here.

As I said in this council on Friday, I visited Afghanistan last week. In Afghanistan, one in three civilian casualties of the conflict is a child. In addition, children continue to be recruited, particularly by armed groups; they remain at risk of sexual violence and are also subject to forced detention.

I want you to imagine a classroom. The teacher has given the class an assignment to 'fill in the blank': I want to be – dot – dot – dot – when I grow up. A doctor? A lawyer? A teacher?

One boy has no answer. A week later, his chair in the classroom is empty.

His father had died in the war, and the boy already knew that he would now have to provide for his family by working as a shoe polisher.

There are countless such stories. Some of them, like this one, were captured in a short film by a young film maker who I met in Herat.

And I can assure you, that in every meeting I had in Afghanistan, I was told how children are the ones who suffer most from the conflict.

We all know that this is the case in every conflict. We, the international community, have a responsibility. We must do all in our power to give all children the right to their childhood.

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Mr. President,

The Secretary-General's report tells us about the shocking scale and severity of violations and abuses against children in armed conflicts around the world. To think of how children have been killed and maimed, recruited and used, as human shields and human bombs, is heartbreaking.

We must not lose this generation of children. How we treat children affected by armed conflict has consequences for their future.

And giving up on them means giving up on their communities, and on the countries they live in.

Mr President,

While we cannot solve all the conflicts on the agenda of the Security Council here and now, we can protect the children that are suffering because of them. The Children and Armed Conflict agenda is a framework for this.

It gives us the tools to prevent all violations and abuses against children and to ensure that perpetrators are held to account. There is a unique consensus within the Council on this agenda, and we should spare no effort in its implementation.

Sweden has a long tradition of working to strengthen the protection of children. As members of the Security Council and as Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict our aim is to advance this work further.

There are a number of areas where we believe there is room for improvement.

Firstly, this Council has heard from child victims of non-state armed groups, including Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and Daesh. Their stories, like Mubin's, are shocking.

They have told us of their recruitment as child soldiers; of sexual slavery; of mass abductions. We have a responsibility to act in the face of such attacks to our common humanity.

The first step is to improve our work to prevent human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. This should include violations and abuses by all parties to conflict, including state and non-state armed groups. In this regard we call on those member states that have not yet done so to sign the Paris Principles and the Safe Schools Declaration.

But, we, the international community, must also ensure that our response to these groups is in accordance with international law.

Secondly, we should prioritise the effective reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces or armed groups. These children should always be treated primarily as victims. Successful reintegration is in the best interests of the child, but also in the best interest of society as a whole. Children should always be part of the solution, not part of the problem. This was a clear message during this Council's visit to the Lake Chad region.

Thirdly, we should guarantee the right to education and protect schools. This is important in order to prevent conflicts and to build a sustainable peace.

The fourth Sustainable Development Goal underlines the important role of children's education in reducing poverty and inequality. Here, I want to mention girls' access to education in particular.

As the penholder for Children and Armed Conflict we are very pleased that the Council today adopted a Presidential Statement that shows the Council's strong unity behind the Children and Armed Conflict mandate. The Presidential Statement strengthens the Council's stance on many of the issues that I have just raised.

Mr President,

Looking to the future, we will continue to lead on this issue. This includes using the Security Council and our role as Chair of the Working Group as a platform to integrate child protection as a priority in peacekeeping, prevention and the sustaining peace-agenda and to stand up for the integrity of the mandate.

We will also work hard in all of our efforts, both inside and outside the Council, to:

- ensure children's right to education;
- ensure children's right to health, including mental health and psychosocial support, in conflicts; and,
- enable children to make their voice heard.

Mr President,

Protecting children today prevents conflicts tomorrow. When we give children their futures back, we give them the opportunity to realize their dreams. Whether it is to become a doctor, a lawyer or a teacher. By doing so, we put in place the building blocks for peaceful and sustainable societies. The children trapped in armed conflict today have no time to lose, neither should we. It is time for action.

Thank You



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech at Security Council briefing on Peace and Security in Africa

Published 30 October 2017

Margot Wallström, New York, 30 October 2017. Check against delivery.

Mr President,

The situation in the Sahel is a source of increasing concern. It has implications, not only for the millions of people facing insecurity and hunger, but also for the wider region, and indeed, globally. The root causes are complex and transboundary. The effects of the spread of violent extremism, organised crime, climate change, a worsening human rights situation and weak institutions are mutually reinforcing. They are having devastating consequences for the people of Sahel and show the limits of traditional peacekeeping. In response, a combination of short- and long-term efforts must be applied. We are heavily engaged through our development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, as well as our contribution to MINUSMA and the EU mission.

Stability in Mali is critical for the Sahel as a whole. Supporting the full, inclusive and effective implementation of the peace agreement must remain a priority, not least in view of the upcoming elections. It is our best chance at building a sustained peace, and preventing the further spread of instability. The sanctions regime established pursuant to resolution 2374 should be an active tool in our endeavours to achieve peace and stability in Mali. However, sanctions are not an end in themselves. They are a means of encouraging political momentum

Mr President,

Allow me to dwell for a moment on the issue of inclusivity. In Mali, Security Council members, during their recent visit, met with women civil society representatives. Asked whether they had access to the political leadership in their country, they responded that they did not only want access to politicians; rather, they wanted to become decision-makers in their own right, represented on equal terms with men.

While the 30 % quota law is a welcome development, women are still largely excluded from the political sphere; just as they are from bodies related to the implementation of the peace agreement. As we discussed on Friday, women's representation is not just a question of fairness; it is a matter of effectiveness and of increasing the probability of a lasting peace agreement.

However, when you fear leaving your house to fetch water a few kilometres away, or when your children are prevented from going to school for years, political representation seems an abstract goal. This is the reality in central Mali, as it is in many other places throughout the Sahel. For me, the interlinkage between security, human rights and development is evident. Without security, there can be no development. Without full respect for human rights, any security effort is doomed to fail, further alienating the population from the state.

Mr President,

The collective efforts of the G5 Sahel countries to step up development efforts, and to move towards the full operationalisation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, are therefore truly commendable. They have our wholehearted support. Considering the complex set of challenges on the ground, the manner in which the force performs its tasks will be critical to its results.

Let me highlight three areas that should guide our continued engagement with the G5 Sahel Joint Force:

Firstly, the G5 Sahel Joint Force is one of many instruments that make up an integrated, sustainable and regional approach to the situation in the Sahel. The primacy of politics should guide this work, and it is essential to ensure that an overarching political framework for the Sahel is put in place.

Continued unity among G5 Sahel countries and the international community is crucial. We also encourage strong engagement by the African Union, not least in ensuring coordination with other regional initiatives and frameworks and in ensuring further integration within the AU Peace and Security

Architecture. This is an opportunity for the UN, the AU and the sub-region to work as one, together with other partners, such as the EU.

Secondly, the success of the force will depend on support to it from the population. This is particularly true where armed terrorist groups are entrenched within the population, exploiting the absence of the state authority. A solid human rights compliance framework will, therefore, be of the utmost importance; not least to restore trust in state institutions and prevent fuelling further radicalisation and destabilisation. The G5 Sahel countries have recognised this need in the Joint Force's Concept of Operations; we must now move towards the establishment of mechanisms to prevent and address international human rights and international humanitarian law violations and abuses.

It is essential that the activities of the force include a gender perspective in planning as well as in specific protection actions. The Joint Force might also encounter children associated with armed groups. Clear procedures on how to tackle this issue, including through cooperation with child protection advisors, are therefore needed.

Finally, peace is best pursued in partnership. We need to ensure that our repeated calls for regional ownership, expectations from the force and our demands for accountability are matched with adequate resources and support.

The suggested options for support put forward by the Secretary-General illustrate that many possibilities exist.

Predictable and sustainable UN support is vital for the force to be able to deliver on its objectives; Sweden stands ready to explore all models, including the most ambitious. A supportive role from the UN can underpin a stronger political framework, including through the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and mutual accountability. In addition to our support through the EU, Sweden is also considering possible ways of supporting the FC-G5S bilaterally, particularly in the area of preventing and addressing human rights and international humanitarian law violations and abuses.

Mr President,

In 2017, an estimated 30 million people in the Sahel will not have enough food to eat. At the same time, terrorists continue to threaten lives and undermine the livelihoods of the population across the region.

The success of our efforts in the Sahel will be judged by how we improve the lives of the people who live there. The G5 Sahel Joint Force is a welcome initiative to increase security, complement the activities of MINUSMA and end the terrorist threat. It deserves our full support. Accompanied by robust and meaningful development efforts to address the root causes of conflict and instability, it offers a chance to set the region on the path to sustainable peace.

Thank you.





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech at the UN Security Council debate on Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

Published 27 October 2017 Updated 27 October 2017

Margot Wallström, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, New York, 27 October 2017. Check against delivery.

Mr President, Colleagues, Friends,

I come here directly from a visit to Herat and Kabul in Afghanistan. I met with women and girls in the midst of conflict. They struggle to make ends meet and to keep their families safe. They face a constant risk of sexual violence.

While talking to these women, my thought was: "What does the Women, Peace and Security agenda do for them"?

Well, it should ensure that the women I met, for instance, those who work in the security sector, have more female colleagues; and that they can work without the threat of harassment.

It should ensure that the female mediators, that Sweden has provided training for, can have a real role. And work without the shadow of death threats.

And, it should ensure that the girl I met – 18 years old, married away at 13, and with five children – that she, perhaps, would have had ten more years, to grow as a person, to get an education, to realise her dreams in life.

Oppression of women is a global disease. We see how women, all over the world, are systematically underrepresented in decision-making, how women receive fewer resources, and how women lack fundamental rights in a

number of areas.

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Mr President,

Sexual violence, as a weapon of war, is a horrendous manifestation of the oppression of women.

I got to see this up close when I, as you might recall, was the first Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict a few years ago. I often say that it was a role that left me with a heavier heart, but also with hope for the future.

What I came to realise was that we make three mistakes when we look at this issue. We tend to view it as inevitable; unspeakable and as a lesser crime.

I had that job back in 2010-2012 when resolution 1325 turned ten years. Today we have had that resolution, and seven more, for 17 years, and we are still, unfortunately, far from eradicating this horrendous practice. It saddens me. But it also strengthens my resolve.

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Mr President,

In order to achieve real results for the Women Peace and Security agenda, we need to work systematically. We need to have a gender perspective in all aspects of peace building.

Let me point to three important aspects.

First: data and analysis. We can do much more about the situation on the ground, if we have and use disaggregated data on women and men. As an example, it could concern statistics on education, internally displaced people or the number of women and men employed in the police force.

Once we have the data, we need to look at it carefully before drawing conclusions. Reporting should have an integrated gender perspective which feeds into the Secretary General's recommendations and conclusions. Women's civil society organisations, often at the frontline, can give valuable input.

Sweden stands ready to work with the UN to enhance data collection, and analysis of gender disaggregated data.

Second: expertise. Many reports have highlighted how gender experts contribute to the overall success of UN Missions. I am worried that budget cuts and mainstreamed mandates could result in cuts of essential gender expertise in UN missions. This would mean that we risk leaving out half of the population in our critical work on Protection of Civilians or strengthening the Rule of Law. And we all must get better at training and providing women to UN peace missions.

Third: Women's organisations and networks. Women organisations receive a disproportionately small amount of development funding. This must change. Whether in the public, private or NGO spheres, there are networks of active women who are actors for peace and security. We should support women's organisations and networks where we can, and enable them to participate fully at a local, national and also at an international level.

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Mr President,

When Sweden joined the Security Council, we set out two overarching priorities: Conflict Prevention and Women, Peace and Security. In all our work in the Council, we have sought to operationalise the Women, Peace and Security agenda. For instance, through ensuring the inclusion of gender reporting in mission mandates and adding listing criterion for sexual and gender-based violence in sanctions regimes. We will continue this work, with commitment, not only on a day like this, but on every other day as well.

It gives me hope that the new UN leadership places gender at the centre of its diplomacy for peace.

It also gives me hope to read the Secretary-General's report, which points out that meaningful participation of women has a demonstrated impact on the sustainability and effectiveness of peace processes, economic development and social prosperity.

There is a momentum for women's participation in peace processes. We should seize this momentum, and place women's full enjoyment of their rights at the core of international peace and security. This is not a women's issue. It is a peace and security issue. This is necessary to successfully

respond to the many crises on the Council's agenda. The frameworks and tools are in place – it is up to us to make it happen. We know what is needed. Political space. Active civil society organisations. Constant capacity building.

And we have examples. For instance, in Afghanistan, where the restructured High Peace Council has 13 female members and 39 male members, Sweden has supported local female leaders to build their capacity to participate in mediation and dialogue processes.

In Somalia, political will from the National Leadership Forum ensured a quota for women in parliament – despite resistance to women's participation.

In Colombia, women's organisations paved the way for women's inclusion in the peace process.

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Mr President,

True change can only be achieved with strong and courageous political leadership. Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed set an example through the joint UN-African Union high-level mission to Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which focused on Women, Peace and Security and development. We should build on this good example and use this methodology in future country visits.

Gender equality makes societies more peaceful. Or as I like to put it: More women more peace. We, the Security Council, need to show leadership. Not only today, but across the country-specific files and in all aspects of our work.

Mr President,

Let us remember Hammarskjöld's words;

No peace which is not peace for all, no rest until all has been fulfilled.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström: How can we make our region more stable and secure?

Published 18 October 2017

Speech at the university in Archangelsk, 18 October 2017. Check against delivery.

Like a bride-to-be, I receive  
A letter at each day's end,  
And late at night I conceive  
An answer for my friend

Brighter, a star is shining  
Between that pair of trees,  
Calmly promising  
That what I dream will be.

(ryska: kak nevésta polutjájo)

Anna Achmátova. Standing before a group of young people like you, I get a sense of nostalgia by lines like that, because it makes me remember that time in life when you lived in dreams about the future.

I hope that you live in dreams about the future, and I hope that some of you would be willing to share your thoughts about the future later.

It is a pleasure to be in Archangelsk and to talk to you today. To those of you who study Swedish, I would like to say:

Vad roligt att ni är intresserade av Sverige. Jag hoppas att ni vill komma och

besöka vårt land någon dag.

Although I would not mind spending all my time talking about poetry and dreams, this speech has a slightly different headline, which is "How can we make our region more stable and secure?"

I will give you five answers to this question, and I would actually like to begin in the future.

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### **1) Number one: common efforts to meet common challenges**

I think that in fifty years from now, we will be judged by how we acted in one particular issue.

There is no question which is as fateful to us – and by us I mean all of us, all humans – as climate change.

It is becoming more and more impossible to look away from it. We can already now see clear effects: shrinking glaciers, shifting plant and animal ranges, growing deserts, increased draughts, and more extreme weather conditions. In your country the Perm frost is starting to melt, and ice on rivers and lakes is breaking up earlier.

This development will lead to devastating consequences for humanity in the future. Just to mention one example – there is a prediction that up to 250 million people in the world may be displaced by climate change by 2050.

I am sorry to say, but previous generations, including my own, have left a mess on this planet which you, and your children will have to clean up. Steps have been taken. The Paris Climate Accord was a paradigm shift, as well as Agenda 2030. But we shall not live under the illusion that they on their own will bring things back to normal.

Climate change hits all of our countries together. And because of that, we need to tackle it together.

### **2) The second answer concerns security politics and confidence building measures**

It is no secret that there are tensions in our region today which were not there a few years' ago.

And it is no secret that our countries have different views on certain international affairs.

However, the Swedish people and the Russian people have one very strong interest in common: that of living together in peace.

There is a lot we can do to minimise the risk of conflict and misunderstandings in our region. I would like to mention the notion of confidence building measures. Those of you who study international politics might know of it.

To put it in simple terms, it is about ways to take away question marks and possible confusion about the behaviour of other countries.

A concrete example of this is when we invite observers to military exercises. The fact that we meet with our Russian colleagues is also a way of increasing confidence.

And also here, I come back to the word "cooperation".

My country's security policy is built on the conviction that threats against peace and stability are best handled in cooperation with other countries.

In the Barents region, constructive regional cooperation has played an important role for stability. The Barents Rescue Area is a concrete example of the added value of practical confidence building in our region.

### **3) Three: gender equality**

I began this speech by quoting a female poet, and I also began by talking about dreams. Your country has a history of strong women. I hope the girls in this room feel inspired by them.

Gender equality is, to put in short, the idea that the dreams of the girls in this room should be as possible to fulfil, as the dreams of the boys.

To me, it is hard to see how this can be controversial to some.

Gender equality is actually an answer to how we can make our region more stable. Why? Because, we can see from research that there is a positive relation between women's opportunities and stability. Gender equality has positive effects on health and education, and it reduces extremism in societies.

An important thing here is that it is also good for men, if women get better lives.

In our government, for every decision that is taken, we ask the question "how does this affect women?".

And if we see that a proposal – for instance a new law – has unintentional effects on women, we try to change it so that it makes life better for both men and women.

#### **4) Four: People-to-people contacts**

Everything I have said so far about cooperation to meet different challenges, will be so much easier to do, if we already know each other.

What I mean by that is simple: it is good for us and for the future, if young Russians meet with young Swedes.

That is why it makes me happy to see that so many of you are studying Swedish. I have heard that there will be Sweden days in Archangelsk later this year, and I hope that many of you will participate in them!

By meeting and making friends with people from other countries, we understand that they are just like us: that they have the same dreams and that they want the same things in life as we do. With such understanding, the risk for conflict gets smaller.

And I believe that the Barents cooperation is an area where this works well. From what I understand, there are Barents Summer schools and networks of young entrepreneurs. Archangelsk and Kiruna are twin towns, and we will organise Sweden days here.

#### **5) Let me, lastly say something about the Barents cooperation, which is why I am here**

Tomorrow we will have a meeting with the Barents Council, where Sweden will take over the Chairmanship from Russia.

In this cooperation, our countries, together with Finland, Norway, Denmark and Iceland meet, as well as with regional and local governments and indigenous peoples. We discuss common challenges and how we can meet them together.

In fact, many of the issues I have mentioned are our priorities for this work.



We want to work with the environment and with economic and social development. And within those areas we want to focus on gender equality and youth exchange.

When it comes to facing the climate and other big challenges, we have developed a Barents Action Plan on climate change.

We will focus our work in the Barents cooperation on sustainable development, youth cooperation and gender equality.

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So, to come back to the first question about how we can make our region more stable and secure, there are ways forward.

But perhaps I could have made this speech much shorter if I had, straight away, given the real answer to the question. It is: you.

You, the young people of Russia, as well as of Sweden and of the other countries in our region. It is you, who will have to deal with the unfinished business of our time. The climate. Our common security. Gender equality. Economic and social equality.

And I can only hope that you will manage it better than my generation has done.

Please add these things to the dreams about your future. And let us all hope, as Achmatova wrote, that what you dream will be.

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I am now ready to take questions from you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# National statement UNGA72

Published 22 September 2017

Delivered by H.E. Ms Margot Wallström, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sweden. Check against delivery.

Mr President, Secretary-General, Excellencies,

In 1954, former Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, stated that "the United Nations was not created to bring us to heaven, but to save us from hell".

The need for a United Nations that seeks to save us from humanity's worst impulses remains. However, in these days of uncertainty we must also learn from - and build on - what is positive in our world, and in the United Nations.

In his important address on Tuesday, our Secretary-General laid out the threats and challenges we face; and how we can overcome them. Delivering a peaceful and prosperous future will depend on collective action.

This is the moment for multilateralism, not unilateralism. We must grasp it or risk the consequences.

The United Nations is at the centre of this effort. It is a tailor-made space for the world to find the solutions to the common challenges of our time. And, despite the, sometimes justified, criticisms, it is clear that we still believe in the United Nations' power. If we did not, Presidents, Prime Ministers, business and civil society leaders would not be here this week. I believe that we all recognise, that in the face of global challenges, 'going it alone' is no longer an option.

The United Nations, founded to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to promote better standards of life in larger freedom, has prevented a repetition of the catastrophic wars that preceded its founding. Extreme poverty has fallen to an historic low. Life expectancy continues to

climb. Millions of people are reached every year with life-saving humanitarian assistance.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sustaining Peace Agenda are a powerful illustration of what we can achieve together.

These agreements are the strategies for our common future. We must now ensure that this organisation has the structure and tools needed to support countries' to deliver them.

The broad support for the Secretary-General's reform agenda illustrates the importance we attach to an effective United Nations, its role at the centre of multilateralism, and as a platform for the delivery of our common commitments.

The scope of the reforms being proposed by the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General reveals the complex task at hand. The Peace and Security Architecture must better prevent conflicts and sustain peace. The UN Development System must be radically reoriented to achieve the 2030 Agenda. And, to deliver these changes, modern management skills and systems will be essential.

More importantly, we must recognise that these reforms cannot be pursued in isolation from one another. People do not experience life in pieces. Their needs must be central. Peace and security, economic and social development, and the protection and promotion of human rights are mutually reinforcing – in responding, all pillars of the UN system, as well as our own bilateral efforts, must also be interlinked and mutually reinforcing. This calls for new ways of thinking and working.

Sweden fully subscribes to the principles for reform articulated by the Secretary-General: a country-level and people centered perspective, gender-parity, decentralized responsibility and decision making, and reformed budget procedures.

Secretary-General Guterres, Deputy Secretary-General Mohammed, you have our full support for your efforts.

On our part, we, as member-states have a responsibility to act coherently, to avoid micro-management and to ensure long-term, stable and adequate financing. More flexible funding is necessary. We firmly believe in core and

un-earmarked funding. We cannot allow ourselves to cherry pick to accommodate domestic interests; this will not give the organization the stability it needs.

I am proud to tell you that Sweden will increase our development cooperation budget by an approximately USD 350 million in 2018, bringing our budget to its highest ever level, and delivering on our commitment to devote 1% of gross national income to ODA. In addition, we will support the Secretary-General's efforts with *kronor*, as well as words, by making available additional flexible funding for reform.

In the immediate term, faced with record-levels of humanitarian need, the humanitarian system requires urgent funding to save lives and end suffering. In the longer term, investing in the 2030 Agenda and the sustaining peace agenda will build resilience.

Excellencies,

Let me focus now on three particular areas in the remainder of my remarks.

Firstly, nine months ago Sweden joined the UN Security Council. As the General Assembly elected us to the Council, it is only proper that I report back to you on what we have been doing on your behalf. Our approach to the Council is simple. While we each come with our national perspective, and while we will not always agree; as Council members, we are bound together by a responsibility to the charter and the world.

To this end, Sweden works with all members to deliver meaningful outcomes from the Council's discussions. We work closely with the other elected members, who represent the broader membership, and bring important perspectives. We are also talking with many of you, as part of our commitment to speak with countries on the Council's agenda, not only about them. Delivering real outcomes for those who need them is a responsibility that goes beyond our national interests.

And needs are growing. The number of major conflicts is on the rise. However, as the Secretary-General has said, neither war, nor peace, is inevitable. They result from the choices we make. Many of the conflicts on the Council's agenda have come about not because we failed to see them coming – the signs were there - but because we failed to respond early enough or quickly enough.

And, prevention means not only choosing to heed the warnings when they come, but investing in peaceful societies to avoid the causes of conflict emerging in the first place. As leaders within our communities, and as national leaders, we must choose peace, invest in peace, deliver peace. And, the UN system must be configured to support us.

Sweden has made conflict prevention a central pillar of our Council membership. We have underscored the need for the Council to recognise the primacy of politics in peacekeeping mandates, and the need for long term political strategies that aim to prevent conflict and sustain peace by addressing root causes. I believe we are making progress.

This is evidenced by the Council's support for a peaceful resolution of the crisis in Gambia, for the peace process in Colombia and for the transitions in Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire, as well as its cooperation with the African Union to bring stability to Somalia.

As Chair of the Council's Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, Sweden has sought to strengthen the protection of children in conflict zones. Protection of children today, prevents conflicts tomorrow.

Nonetheless, we have more to do. The situation in Myanmar is a haunting example of where the seeds of conflict went unresolved, with tragic consequences. It is now urgent that the violence end, that the population be protected, that human rights be respected, and that dignified return be allowed. Humanitarian access is essential. Sweden supports the recommendations of the Annan Commission. We urge the Myanmar government to implement them without delay.

In Syria, prevention also failed. The price paid by the country and its citizens has been unimaginable and horrific. Sweden will continue to work through the Council for nationwide humanitarian access. And for a political solution, which is the only option for long-term peace and a better future for Syria.

In South Sudan, the civilian population has also borne the brunt of a nearly 4-year long devastating conflict. I welcome recent initiatives by South Sudan's neighbours. I urge the Government and all other parties to increase humanitarian access, to lay down their arms and engage in a meaningful process to end this conflict.

We continue our longstanding engagement in trying to advance the Middle East Peace Process. As the Secretary-General said during his recent visit to

the region, the two-state-solution is the only way forward. Only a negotiated settlement between the parties and an end to the 50 years of occupation, can achieve this goal – Israel and Palestine living side-by-side in peace and security. We need to resolve this conflict once and for all. Doing so will have implications for peace that go beyond the holy land and the Middle East itself.

Perhaps the greatest threat to international peace and security is the unacceptable and repeated provocations by the DPRK in pursuit of a nuclear weapons programme. We call upon the DPRK to cease further testing, fulfil its international obligations, and turn to a path of sincere dialogue on de-nuclearization. All states must implement the measures decided upon by a united Security Council. Sanctions must be combined with political efforts to pave the way for a peaceful solution. We welcome the Secretary-General's pledge to make his good offices available to this end.

Excellencies,

Lasting peace requires the involvement of the entire population, meaning that the full, equal, and effective participation of women must be hardwired into all of our efforts towards sustaining peace. This brings me to my second point, Women, peace and security.

As a representative of the world's first feminist government, this issue is close to my heart. From speaking with many of you, I realise that I am far from alone in my strong conviction that women's participation in peace and security efforts is essential for sustainable peace.

Ensuring women's participation must be at the centre of the UN's reform efforts. Sweden is working tirelessly to put the Women, Peace and Security agenda into action in all aspects of the Council's work, from including gender reporting in mission mandates to adding listing criterion for sexual and gender-based violence in sanctions regimes.

Sweden's feminist foreign policy is an agenda for change aimed at increasing rights, representation and resources for all women and girls, based on the reality of their lives. We urge all countries to form their own feminist policy and to ensure that everyone, women, men, boys and girls are treated equally.

Excellencies,

My third, and last point, is our common responsibility for global

development. The 2030 Agenda provides the pathways to achieve the peaceful, sustainable and equitable societies we want. All countries – rich and poor - share the responsibility of turning this promise into a reality for millions of people around the world. It will not be done by governments alone. All stakeholders from across society have a part to play. Ensuring that the UN Development System is transformed to support these efforts will be critical.

Measuring our progress against the Sustainable Development Goals will be essential both for decision making and accountability. Sweden has developed a set of national goals, linked to the SDGs and our national budget, which we are using to measure the development of our society.

As we all know, the strength of the 2030 Agenda is in the inherent interlinkages between all 17 goals. Each goal is equally important and interdependent; nonetheless, I would like to highlight two goals.

First, the goal of Reducing Inequality: Globalization has opened the world, strengthened economic growth and lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty. However, we have failed to spread the benefits of globalization equally. We must do better. As part of our contribution, in 2016, Sweden, together with an initial core group of states, business and trade unions, launched the Global Deal for Decent Work and Inclusive Growth. The Global Deal is a partnership developed with the ILO and the OECD with a focus on enhanced social dialogue and sound industrial relations, which are crucial to reducing inequality.

The second goal I would like to mention is that of Healthy Oceans and Seas. The oceans connect us all. Without water, there is no life. Therefore, the deteriorating condition of our oceans must ring alarm bells for us all. Sweden was pleased to co-host, with Fiji, The Ocean Conference that took place in June. The multi-stakeholder participation, and commitments made, highlighted the fact that saving the oceans will require all sectors of society to play their part – and that they are ready to do so.

The oceans are also affected by, and in return affect, our climate. We are already seeing the devastating impact of extreme weather events. Climate change will increase the frequency and intensity of such events. Left unchecked, climate change will wash away development gains and increase instability and conflict.

To those few that still doubt the overwhelming evidence that climate change

is real, I ask: are you really willing to take the chance? Especially when we see that new technologies offer the opportunity to simultaneously reduce emissions and grow economies. Sweden is already proving this is possible and has set a goal of zero net greenhouse emissions by 2045.

All countries must join the effort to achieve the decisive transformations needed to reduce emissions and prevent the worse effects of climate change from happening. With 160 State Parties to the Paris Agreement so far, the global commitment remains strong.

Excellencies,

In his address on Tuesday, the Secretary-General told us "We must act as one, because only together, as united nations, can we fulfil the promise of the Charter and advance human dignity for all."

He is right. The expression that "We are all in this together" has perhaps never been so apt. As our world becomes more integrated, so do the challenges and threats we face. We cannot go it alone, we must stand together. Multilateralism is the only path to peace and prosperity.

Thank you.





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Athens Democracy Forum

Published 14 September 2017 Updated 14 September 2017

Athens, 14 September 2017. Check against delivery.

Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to have been given this opportunity to speak to you here at the Athens Democracy Forum – and on the eve of the International Day of Democracy. A most pertinent time and place for this conversation.

As many before me have noted, the idea of liberal democracy is being challenged. Many western countries are facing a crisis of confidence.

There seems to be a growing divide between people – and declining trust in elected officials. Globalisation has lifted many people out of poverty, but it has also left many behind – many of whom now voice their discontent at the ballot box or elsewhere.

At the same time, many emerging democracies are beginning to show signs of backsliding. In May this year, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs published reports on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in 135 countries. Unfortunately, the reports show that the situation is deteriorating in many parts of the world. At the same time, there are more armed conflicts and violence in the world today than in a long time. According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program at Uppsala University, there are currently 50 state-based armed conflicts in the world.

There are many explanations for how we ended up here. Thousands of analyses have been made. But we don't have all night...

I do believe, however, that we can all agree that confidence in democratic institutions needs to be regained, on many different levels. Of course, measures need to be taken nationally.

To build confidence globally, leaders must put short-term self-interest aside, and work together to achieve the stability and security that people who voted for them rightly expect – to work for peace.

The inability of the international community to prevent conflict undermines trust in institutions such as the United Nations. Syria is just one example.

So, today I would like to talk about how the concept of security and the nature of conflict are changing. About how we should manage today's wide range of security threats to prevent armed conflict from breaking out. I will talk about how to invest in long-term peace for future generations.

First, I will say a few words about the need, as I see it, to change the mindset about security. I will then make three points on the action we can take.

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### **Changing the way we think about security.**

It may be trite to say that we are living in dangerous and turbulent times, but this is a fact that must be emphasised. Perhaps it has never been as difficult to deal with contemporary challenges as it is today.

More than ever before, our reality is characterised by complex and interlinked conflicts, threats and challenges. Be it the threat of North Korean nuclear weapons, the increasing tensions between Russia and the West, or the seemingly unstoppable Syrian conflict and the migration and refugee flows stemming from it.

And these conflicts and threats are far from the traditional conflicts of the past. Now we have non-state actors. Terrorism. Cyber warfare. It is harder to distinguish between beginning and end, and harder to distinguish who the winner is.

Against this background, it is unfortunate that in recent years the global conversation about security has increasingly focused on military spending.

There are about 65 million displaced people in the world today. This means immense human suffering. And it also threatens stability, not least in Europe.

We have all witnessed the EU's inability to deal with large influxes of refugees.

By 2050, an estimated 250 million people may be displaced by climate change. That is four times the number of displaced people in the world today.

Climate change will make the world a less safe place in many ways. Lack of food and water is a great driver of conflict. It is high time we made the connection between climate and security.

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So, what action do we need to take?

**Firstly, we need to defend the multilateral world order and improve collaboration.**

Many of today's security threats, including climate change and terrorism, know no borders. This is why we need to harness the full potential of multilateral platforms such as the United Nations, the European Union and the African Union to find common and sometimes global responses.

The Paris Agreement is one such response. The fact that almost every country in the world was able to agree that climate change is a real threat requiring global action is a historic achievement we should be proud of.

Yet today, the whole idea of collaboration and multilateralism is being questioned. Brexit, increased protectionism, abuse of the veto in the UN Security Council, and the US decision to leave the Paris Agreement are some examples. Actors in the international system appear to increasingly view the world from a transactional perspective – as a zero-sum game, where you can only win if someone else loses.

I do not share this world view; the fact that collaboration between nations often produces win-win situations and common security is well documented. The EU is one good example – perhaps one of the most successful peace projects the world has ever seen.

The multilateral rule-based world order came into being for a reason. The opening words of the United Nations Charter are: "We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war...". To achieve global stability, we must defend this world order.

Might does not make right.

Real democracies, built on equality, trust and social security, are more resilient and much less prone to armed conflict. There can be no compromise on principles. We cannot achieve sustainable peace and security merely through political transactions. If we want to achieve real results, we must be guided by our principles and values. This is the smartest policy.

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**Secondly, we have to invest in peace. Spend money on the right things.**

Si vis pacem, para bellum: If you want peace, prepare for war. Unfortunately, this well-known Latin proverb seems to resonate just as much today as it did in the 5th century.

Some people want to make us believe that buying weapons means buying security. But their business plan is flawed. Raising military spending to two per cent of our GDP won't make the world's security threats disappear. Perhaps we need an additional target: a spending target for investments in crisis prevention, development and economic cooperation – in long-term, sustainable peace.

This means encouraging countries to invest in security-building measures such as diplomacy and confidence building, foreign aid and development cooperation, multilateral cooperation and action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Diplomacy is the first line of defence. As US Secretary of Defence James Mattis said in 2013, while Commander of US Central Command: "If you don't fully fund the State Department, then I need to buy more ammunition."

For most countries, military spending and proper military capability will of course continue to be a cornerstone of security policy. But there is no way military spending alone will solve the wide range of threats and challenges we face today.

Sweden contributes one per cent of GDP to foreign aid and development cooperation. Today, I am happy to announce that we are committing an additional SEK 225 million over the next three years specifically for long term investments in peace and security. This includes support for free media, women's representation, disarmament and strengthening the UN's work to prevent conflict.

Modern times require modern policy. Considering the many and varied threats and challenges facing present and future generations, the words to live by should be: Si vis pacem, para pacem: If you want peace, prepare for peace.

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### **Thirdly, more women more peace**

Gender equality is the unfinished business of our time. We know that when all of society is included, and both women and men have a voice, we stand a better chance of building a foundation for legitimate peace agreements that create socially and economically sustainable societies.

As some of you might know, Sweden has a feminist government and a feminist foreign policy. Half the population cannot be left behind if the aim is sustainable peace. Research shows that the probability of a peace agreement being sustained is 35 percent higher if women participated in the process, yet only 4% of the signatories of peace agreements between 1992 and 2011 were women.

Peace processes therefore inherently need to be inclusive. Women must actively participate in all decision-making processes at all levels and be active in defining priorities and resource allocation, in times of peace and in times of war. To put it simply: "Nothing for women without women."

To put words into action, I have initiated a Swedish network of women peace mediators, and Sweden is simultaneously taking part in the development of a Nordic women's mediator network. The goal is not only to strengthen our national capabilities but, more importantly, to cut across traditional divides and create cooperative networks with international women mediation teams worldwide.

As a member of the United Nations Security Council, Sweden works to ensure that women are present – in resolutions, statements and debates – in peace negotiations and operations.

Wherever I have travelled in the world, from Ukraine to Colombia to DR Congo, I have met brave women who strive to de-escalate violence and promote initiatives for peace, often in very dangerous environments where risks to personal safety are extreme. The work of these women is extraordinary and it deserves our full support and long-term commitment.

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To conclude:

By changing the way we view threats, and taking a long-term perspective when we respond, we can prevent immeasurable human suffering and the huge monetary costs involved in managing conflicts after they break out. When we do this, we also restore confidence in the ability of leaders and the international community to do what is right.

I would like to end by quoting former US first lady, diplomat and human rights activist Eleanor Roosevelt: "It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it."

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at launch of UNDP report Journey to Extremism in Africa: drivers, incentives and the ‘tipping point’ for recruitment

Published 13 September 2017

Fotografiska, Stockholm, 11 september.

Let me first extend a warm welcome to the launch of the UNDP study "Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment". It is a great privilege and honour to host the launch of such an important and timely report here in Stockholm.

I would especially like to thank Fotografiska for hosting this event and the accompanying photo exhibition as well as the UNDP for their tireless work for global development. It is encouraging to see such broad participation and engagement in what amounts to one of the great threats to peace, security and development today: violent extremism.

As we are all unfortunately aware, terrorism continues to cause suffering, fear and disruption across the globe. Indeed, we suffered an attack here in Stockholm only a few months ago, in which five people were killed and 15 people injured. In other parts of the world, far greater numbers are victims of extremist groups such as Daesh, Boko Haram and al-Shabab as they continue to commit heinous crimes and serious abuses and violations of human rights, including sexual enslavement, child and forced marriages and denials of girls’ and women’s enjoyment of the right to education.

We need to do everything we can to put an end to the horrors of terrorism.

Terrorism threatens the very foundation of peaceful, democratic and open societies.

I would like to emphasize three areas that are central in the fight against extremism.

First, a comprehensive and sustainable approach to countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism must include a broad range of measures and perspectives. While we must continue to take measures that enhance security, it is essential not to overlook the importance of tackling the root causes to terrorism and ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Violent extremism is often inspired by a global agenda but rooted in local discontent. Injustices and deprivation of rights and dignity can nurture recruitment to extremist violent groups. Only through strengthening societal inclusiveness, political participation and respect for human rights, can we successfully prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism. A carefully designed gender-perspective is also needed, taking into account the different perspectives of men and women and girls and boys are crucial to creating lasting results.

Secondly, I would like to point out the close relationship between development and violent extremism. Violent extremism has devastating consequences not only for those who are directly affected by it, but also for the development gains which have been made in recent decades. Terrorism breeds instability and division, which in turn generate poverty, lack of economic opportunity, forced migration, organized crime and breeding grounds for further radicalization.

The most sustainable way to fight this radicalization is through long-term efforts like the ones found in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

This brings me to my third point: the importance of research. This UNDP study makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the drivers of violent extremism, in Africa and beyond.

The more we learn about the drivers and root causes of radicalization, the more we understand the importance of individual and local circumstances. It is only with a solid grasp of these underlying factors and circumstances that we can effectively and sustainably counter and prevent that which motivates individuals and groups to commit acts of violence. Finally, I would like to say a few words about the particular geographical context of this study. Due



to the unique ethnic and religious configuration of many African states and the transnational nature of terrorism, broad regional approaches are necessary. This includes working through regional fora and multilateral institutions. The African Union is an important partner in countering terrorism and preventing radical extremism.

We need to work with African partners in a bilateral and multilateral setting against violent extremism and the rise of radicalisation. Civil society and international organizations also have an important role to play. Indeed, the UNDP Africa program 'Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa: A Development Approach' is a good example of how development can be directly linked to measures against the root causes of radicalisation and violent extremism.

I would once again like to extend my thanks to the UNDP for their work. It is only with a solid understanding of the underlying causes, drivers and motivations of violent extremism that effective approaches can be designed.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Concluding remarks, Hanaholmen

Published 07 September 2017

Nu blåser storm därute, och stänger sommarens dörr,  
Det är för sent för att undra och leta.  
Jag älskar kanske mindre än vad jag gjorde förr,  
men mer än du nånsin får veta  
Nu ser vi alla fyrar kring höstens långa kust  
och hör vågorna vill samma vandra  
En enda sak är viktig, och det är hjärtats lust  
och att få vara samman med varandra.

Ja, det blåser storm där ute. Det blåser storm över Östersjön, och det blåser storm över Atlanten. Och till utmaningarna i omvärlden, har vi under det här året fått lägga terrorn, som drabbat våra länder – i Åbo och Stockholm.

Vi måste fortsätta hålla i varandra, om vi ska kunna stå upp, även när det stormar. Därför är jag glad över att vara här idag.

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When I was thinking about a suitable introduction to these remarks, I thought: "Finland 100 years, the close Finnish Swedish relations; perhaps a Finnish Swedish author has written something appropriate ..."

What came to mind was, of course, Märta Tikkanen's "Love story of the century". But giving it a second thought, I soon realised that it would perhaps not be seen as good diplomacy to use such a comparison of our relationship, which after all has not been that complicated ...

But we have been a kind of a couple for a century. Today's seminar has been one of many examples of this special relationship. I have been listening with great interest during this morning, and let me share a few thoughts about the different thematic areas that we have covered today.

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The European security order is under pressure, and again, we have a sharpened security situation in our direct neighborhood.

In hard times, close friends like us have to stick together. Luckily, we have the best of possibilities to do so. Sweden and Finland share the same values and interests, and we have a close bilateral partnership as well as practical cooperation.

The Swedish-Finnish cooperation in foreign policy is extensive. Let me put it in concrete terms: Minister Soini and I meet on a regular basis – we have even become travel companions, I am looking forward to going to Macedonia later this autumn. Our foreign ministries have a dialogue on all levels. Our diplomats cooperate closely in all corners of the world. Since September last year, a Finnish official serves in my ministry, and a couple of days ago a Swedish official started a one year service in the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Our cooperation is broad. To mention a few examples, there is conflict prevention and mediation, crisis management operations and our deepened defence cooperation, which now includes planning for scenarios beyond peace-time.

There is a need for diplomacy and confidence building measures in order to prevent crisis and to strengthen common security. Dialogue in the OSCE, including with Russia, is vital. Of course Finland's experience with its eastern neighbor is something we look at as well.

Next week, Sweden organizes the large-scale national military exercise "Aurora". Finland and other partners will participate, which we really appreciate. We have also invited a number of States to a voluntary Vienna document inspection of the exercise. This kind of openness is important for predictability and stability in our region.

- Sweden welcomes the establishment of the Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid threats, which is an important platform for regional cooperation as well as cooperation between the EU and NATO on hybrid issues. We also welcome the initiative for the Centre of Excellence to assess hybrid threats and risks in the Baltic Sea region, in cooperation with the EU and NATO.

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Then there is the "little" issue of the EU.

Sweden and Finland came into the EU as a couple more than twenty years ago. I do not have to convince anyone here about the advantages of the European Union. But I think it would be of interest if I listed a few examples of Swedish-Finnish cooperation to strengthen the EU in the area of foreign and security policy.

First, let's not forget that Sweden and Finland actively contributed to shape the Common Defence and Security Policy. It all started with a Swedish-Finnish initiative to bring the so-called Peterberg tasks into the EU, followed by establishing the civilian-military nature of the CSDP at the EU Summit in Helsinki in 1999.

And speaking of initiatives, our two countries more recently took the initiative to develop the EU Global Strategy, which is now the framework for our common security and defence policy.

Also, Sweden and Finland are the initiators of a civilian stabilisation mission in Iraq, which I hope will be deployed shortly and help Iraq in the new post-Mosul phase.

What lies ahead? We now enter a dynamic phase for EU's security and defence co-operation. Sweden and Finland will keep working together to influence it, because Europe needs to assume a greater responsibility for its own security.

At the same time, the EU is challenged both internally and externally. In this situation we must do more to strengthen the common security and defence policy. It is Sweden's intention to join the permanent structured co-operation (PESCO) and to contribute to its success.

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Now, if we zoom out further – there is the relationship between the EU and the United States.

Let us admit that there are heavy winds over the Atlantic. But let us also admit that both sides of the ocean have, and will have, strong common interests. A simple example is that transatlantic trade creates 15 million jobs in the US and in the EU.

If we care about the security and prosperity of our citizens, we have to have constructive relations with the US. It is as simple as that. Be it on the issue of pandemics or global terrorism or security – we have to work together to tackle global challenges forcefully.

The realization that we still need close ties to the US does not mean that we should not be clear about our core principles. That goes without saying.

To be effective, the EU needs to stand united, speak with one voice, and act in a coherent manner.

Also, let us not forget that Nordic cooperation can complement EU action.

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Excellencies,

These times are turbulent and unpredictable. But looking back at our century old relation, we can at least say that we have been through tough times before.

In a world disrupted, how can we act as a Nordic block?

First, we need to cooperate to improve the capacity of the multilateral system and the UN to address today's threats and challenges. All Nordic countries strongly support the vision of the UN Secretary-General for a "surge in diplomacy of peace".

We need to move from reactive measures towards long-term political solutions. In the UN Security Council, Sweden has made conflict prevention a core priority. We look forward to continued Nordic cooperation on this agenda during our membership.

Remember what Defence Secretary Mattis said back in 2013: "If you don't fully fund the State Department, I will need to buy more ammunition".

Peaceful democracies don't go to war with each other. Yet, money for ammunition seems to be easier to come by, than funds for peace building efforts.

No peace is sustainable without the inclusion of women. I take pride in being a minister in a government that calls itself Feminist, and our endeavours to promote a feminist foreign policy are known by everyone here.

But I am happy that we are not alone. Last year we launched the Nordic Women Mediation Network together with our Nordic neighbours. The goal is not only to bring together Nordic women mediators, but also to create a vibrant global community of international women mediation teams. To date, the Network has made positive contributions to peace efforts in Syria, Afghanistan, Cyprus and Burundi – and several more engagements are being planned.

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Dear all,

this "Love story of the century" between Finland and Sweden is a world of its own: it has been full of royal visits, high level arrangements and ice-hockey games. Culture and trade. But more importantly, it is made up of millions of Finns and Swedes who speak the same languages, who work

together, who live together – or, to paraphrase Tove Jansson; who quietly, without interruption and with great concentration, carry on with the one-hundred-and-one small things that make up their world.

Thank you, kiitos, tack!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström's speech on Raoul Wallenberg Day

Published 28 August 2017

Stockholm, 27 August 2017. Check against delivery.

Friends,

It is an honour and a pleasure to welcome you to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for this year's Raoul Wallenberg Commemorative Lecture on modern forms of anti-Semitism by historian Dr Henrik Bachner.

This theme is unfortunately all too relevant these days as well. We have recently seen appalling pictures of Nazi groups, the Ku Klux Klan and white supremacist demonstrators in Charlottesville, Virginia. The Nordic Resistance Movement was on site during Almedalen Week. On 1 May, Nazi demonstrators also paraded through Falun. Henrik's lecture will shed light on some of the worrying anti-Semitic trends of our time and offer insights into how we can combat anti-Semitism.

The unconditional condemnation of anti-Semitism – and all forms of racism and religious oppression – is a democratic obligation. The Swedish Government is very concerned about these developments, both at home and around the world, and our role in combating these manifestations is unwavering.

This day also offers an important opportunity to stop for a moment and remember Raoul Wallenberg and his actions. With a major dose of courage, cunning, commitment and calm, he succeeded in saving thousands of Jews from the Holocaust by issuing them with protective passports. It is essential that we never forget such moral courage, and it is equally important that we draw inspiration from it in the world we live in today. I would like to extend

my warmest congratulations to this and last year's winner of the Raoul Wallenberg Award.

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We are witnessing increasing intolerance and hate in Sweden, Europe and around the world – on the internet, in our streets and around religious institutions.

This intolerance and hate is often directed at minority groups such as Jews, but it is also a threat to us all and to our democracy – a democracy that we in Europe have fought hard for.

The Swedish Government believes that civil society is absolutely necessary and important in combating anti-Semitism and all forms of racism, hate and intolerance. Sweden is a pluralistic and democratic country, and the Government is completely determined and engaged in its efforts to protect these basic values in our society and culture.

Jewish life is part of Swedish life, and Jewish culture is an important thread in our Swedish cultural and social tapestry.

Everyone who lives in Sweden must be able to live an equal, secure and dignified life – without fear or threats when practising their peaceful religion. Freedom of religion is a fundamental human right.

The Government has taken a range of measures to protect Jewish life in Sweden – focusing in particular on education, critical media awareness, and knowledge about history and the Holocaust.

To ensure that everyone in our country knows about Nazi crimes against humanity, the Government will reintroduce grants to enable school pupils to make remembrance trips to Auschwitz.

And in 2020 – 20 years after the important Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust – Sweden will arrange a new conference of remembrance and education.

Efforts to strengthen democracy, support civil society and improve security around religious institutions are other cornerstones in our efforts in this national endeavour.

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But anti-Semitism is not a local phenomenon – it is a global problem. For centuries, Jews have been the target of unfair accusations, persecution, hate and violence – not limited to any particular national or regional context – rather merely because they were Jews.

Anti-Semitism has deep historical roots and has taken many forms, often having both local and transnational characteristics. The arrival of the internet has seen the emergence of borderless environments fostering hate, in which long-standing conspiracy theories about Jews have been revived and given new outlets.

The battle against anti-Semitism online is a comprehensive challenge facing open and democratic societies. Countries must cooperate with the media industry, civil society and experts.

The 'EU Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online' is an important step, but much remains to be done to monitor, report on and enforce accountability.

Continued international cooperation is essential. The EU, the United Nations and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance are important partners that Sweden continues to actively cooperate with, and bilateral consultations with countries such as Israel, the United States and European countries continue to be a priority.

Anti-Semitism must also be seen in its broader context of hate, intolerance, war and terrorism – both online and offline.

We see how anti-Semitism flourishes in the same environments as violent extremism – environments where democratic values are replaced by violence.

The ongoing wars across the globe, the horrors of terrorism – at close quarters and at a distance – underscore with all their clarity the importance of continuing to address the root causes of intolerance, hate, violence and armed conflict.

Through international cooperation in the EU and the UN, through education, legislation, policing and security-enhancing measures, we must continue long-term confidence-building and conflict resolution, and continue to work for a global culture based on respect and dialogue – not least between religions – and upholding human rights in all contexts.

It is obvious that no country can achieve this on its own, and it is clear that national governments must collaborate with civil society.

An active, democratic civil society, education, dialogue and collaboration are undoubtedly key to a more peaceful and more tolerant world.

I would like to thank you for coming here today, and to thank Henrik, who will speak on anti-Semitism. Greater knowledge is an important step in the fight against anti-Semitism.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at seminar about the EU and the Western Balkans

Published 21 June 2017

Europahuset, Stockholm 29 May 2017. Check against delivery.

**Ministers, Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

A very warm welcome to Stockholm, and to this timely and important discussion on EU accession of the Western Balkan countries.

Much has changed since we met in this format a year and a half ago. One of the EU Member States, and a close friend to many of us, has unfortunately decided to leave the Union.

Some might even say that since we last met, we have witnessed a shift in the global political climate, a shift towards what has been called "the age of anger".

But we have also seen a progressive candidate, with EU flags at his rallies, win the French presidential election.

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Friends,

The political winds may change direction, but Sweden is resolute when it

comes to the Western Balkans.

We have always been a strong advocate of deepened democratic and economic reforms through EU enlargement.

This policy enjoys broad parliamentary and public support in Sweden. But, here too, there are voices that question whether the EU should expand any further.

These voices may say: "Perhaps that's enough for now; perhaps it's time to pause; perhaps this is a good time to wait and see."

My view is this: if we go down that path, we will not only threaten European stability.

We will be shirking our moral obligation to honour our promise. In 2003, the EU declared that all the countries of the Western Balkans were potential EU candidate countries.

Predictability and credibility must be hallmarks of the European Union.

We must stay true to our commitments.

Some of the countries in the region are already candidate countries, and some have started negotiating membership through their own hard work.

For these countries to enjoy continued stability and development, the door to the EU must remain open.

It was therefore extremely encouraging to hear High Representative Frederica Mogherini clearly reaffirm this message during her Western Balkans tour earlier this year.

Continued democratic and economic reforms in the Western Balkans are perhaps more important today than ever before, both for the countries of the Western Balkans and for the EU.

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Friends,

As you can hear, my conviction is firm: closer relations with the EU for the countries of the Western Balkans are crucial for our common European

future.

I will now outline three reasons for this conviction.

Firstly: the EU accession reform agenda brings stable societies. The EU accession process has brought peace and prosperity to central Europe and the Balkans.

The process has helped to transform societies, profoundly and for the better – even though many challenges remain in the Western Balkans, as we all know.

But in order to meet these challenges and enhance stability where tensions remain, I believe that more and deeper cooperation with the EU is needed. Not less.

And the job is not finished until all the potential candidate countries of the Western Balkans, who want to become members, are members of the EU.

Since we last met in December 2015, positive developments have taken place:

- In September last year, the Council asked the Commission to prepare an opinion on whether Bosnia and Herzegovina was ready to start negotiations.
- The Stabilisation and Association Agreement between Kosovo and the EU has entered into force.
- Both Serbia and Montenegro have continued to open new chapters in their negotiations.
- If Albania continues its crucial justice reform, we might soon see a decision by the Council to open negotiations.
- And with a new government soon in place in Skopje – within a few days according to the latest reports – we are hoping for some movement in Macedonia as well.

Only through dynamic EU integration processes can we build lasting stability.

But commitment must be shown by all EU Member States.

Individual Member States cannot use bilateral issues to block progress. The pace of progress on EU integration should be based solely on the merits of reforms and EU alignment.

This is how we guarantee the credibility of a process that has been so successful thus far – strict but fair conditionality.

The European Commission's task is to guide us all through this process with unwavering drive and dedication.

We need this engagement and commitment to be supported by Member States at the highest political level, and to be accompanied by adequate resources.

However, and most importantly: the enlargement countries will set the pace through their determination and ability to address the key challenges they face.

Rule of law, fundamental rights and freedoms – as well as economic development – are at the heart of the European Union.

It is therefore natural for them to be at the heart of your countries' accession process.

We all know that major challenges exist: lack of respect for the rule of law and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression, as well as organised crime and corruption.

For all of the Western Balkan countries, serious efforts are still needed in these areas on your path towards the EU.

Secondly: regional cooperation and socio-economic development – connectivity, openness, youth, reconciliation – are the way forward.

Regional cooperation is a cornerstone of the European Union. We can never achieve stability and peace, let alone economic development, without good neighbourly relations and cooperation.

Therefore, the EU has insisted on regional cooperation in the Western Balkans.

Over the last few years, the Berlin process has helped to boost the connectivity of the countries in the region, and we fully support this. The

Western Balkan countries may be relatively small, but together you can be competitive.

Here, your situation is comparable to that of the Nordic countries. We have long-standing cooperation including a customs union and freedom of movement. And this remains in place, despite the fact that some of us have joined the EU and others haven't. Because it is still very valuable to us.

There is a need for socio-economic development in the Balkans. Here too, you could help each other and support progress in your countries for the benefit of all.

Regional cooperation will also help reconciliation between countries and within countries. The younger generations need to get to know each other and understand that they have a common future, regardless of the events of the past.

I would like to see more youth programmes in the Western Balkans, with people coming together to learn from each other.

And thirdly: let us communicate the EU to our citizens.

Friends, we have a common challenge – how to communicate all the benefits of the EU to our citizens: peace and prosperity, freedom and justice.

We have to work together to ensure that our common values are understood and appreciated.

We need to work together to better explain how all the rules and regulations, and meetings and compromises, translate into a better life for us all.

We need to counter the disinformation about the EU and its Member States from those who want to undermine us and curtail our fundamental freedoms.

To this end, we know that free media and the freedom of expression are fundamental. But we need to ensure that people understand the difference between free and responsible media, journalists who scrutinise power through democratic means, and those who use the freedom of expression to do harm.

We also need to discuss and debate why further EU enlargement, for example throughout the Western Balkans, is in the interest of Europe as a project for peace and prosperity.

And when we communicate this important vision, we need to remember the following: communication, at its core, is about democratisation.

We need a European Union for the citizens, where people feel that it is their Union and that they have a say in where it is heading.

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My vision is perhaps best encapsulated by a music school in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Mostar Rock School.

As we all know, the wonderful city of Mostar has had its fair share of challenges. But this school gives young people from across the Mostar region the opportunity to engage with one another, and the focus of everyone's attention is music – not ethnicity or family history.

This project has been very successful, bringing young people together around a common passion. Sweden is very proud to support this music school and welcomes plans for similar projects across the Western Balkans.

This wonderful example shows that reconciliation is possible; it demonstrates the power of music and culture; it reminds us that young people are the future; and it illustrates that efforts to support the Western Balkans bring hope and stability to our common continent.

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Friends,

I began by talking about how the winds of change shift.

But the fundamental values of the EU remain the same.

They are, as always, enshrined in our Treaty: respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

These values – and I feel honoured and proud reading them out loud – might be challenged by some, even within the EU.

But, at the same time, they remain our moral compass as we face the future.

In challenging times like these, we have to stand together, and recall how



and why our union was first established.

As we know, it was created by linking the economies of France and Germany. A historic and political journey followed, as more and more countries joined.

As the Franco-German engine might once again give renewed impetus to our European project, Sweden's position remains the same.

We are well aware of the impact of Brexit, including on the will to deepen and enlarge our Union.

We are well aware that further enlargement is governed by the Copenhagen criteria, and that the current state of our union underlines the importance of democratic governance, human rights and the rule of law.

But as I have clearly indicated, Sweden remains a strong advocate of deepened democratic and economic reforms through EU enlargement, not least with regard to our friends in the Western Balkans.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech at the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska, USA

Published 11 May 2017

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, 11 May 2017. Check against delivery.

**Excellencies, colleagues, Arctic friends,**

It is truly a great pleasure to be back in beautiful Alaska.

I would like, first of all, to thank Secretary Tillerson and the Host Committee for their warm hospitality.

And to the United States: Congratulations on a successful chairmanship.

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While many parts of the world are marred with violence and conflicts, the Arctic is characterised by peace, stability, low tension and cooperation based on respect for international law.

But the Arctic is also about challenges. I wonder what our planet would say if she had a seat at our table.

Perhaps she would remind us how the Arctic functions as our cooling system.

Perhaps she would admit to being as concerned as the scientific community. As worried as the local and indigenous communities who live on the life-support systems it offers.

This deep concern might stem from the fact that things are changing so fast. Only two decades from now, the Arctic Ocean could be largely free of sea ice.

Perhaps our planet would say: I have been your best friend since the Industrial revolution. I have done all I can to dampen and absorb. I have tried to keep Greenland and the permafrost in Siberia intact.

I have sent you no invoices. But this is about to change.

Perhaps our planet would quote our own reports: Arctic warming could have a cumulative net cost of 90 trillion dollars at the end of this century.

Friends,

The 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement provide a science-based path away from these risks and towards equality and sustainability.

Like no other generation before us, we have the knowledge, technology, money and capacity to save our planet.

It's a win-win, as the business community knows. Investment in green solutions creates new jobs. Sustainability has become a business case. And in the longer term, the low-carbon growth story is the only growth story on offer.

The Swedish example shows that it is possible. Since 1990 we have reduced our greenhouse gas emissions by 23 percent. Meanwhile our GDP has grown by 58 percent.

My Government has set the next target: Sweden will be carbon neutral by 2045.

Our common goal, to save the Arctic, requires a joint **priority, political will** and a **process** of new scientific research, business innovation and many determined steps towards a sustainable future.

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Timo, the Arctic Council will be in safe hands with Finland as Chair.

You know that if we want a sustainable future, we need a stable Arctic. With my grandchildren in mind, I would say: let's go for it.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at SIPRI Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development

Published 11 May 2017

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at SIPRI Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development, 3-4 May 2017, Stockholm. Check against delivery.

Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege and honour to welcome you to the fourth annual Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development.

First of all, I would like to thank SIPRI for having established this Forum as a meaningful and important new tradition. This is the fourth time we have met – and, unfortunately, the reasons for us gathering around these issues of peace and development remain urgent.

Since our task is so important, I am particularly pleased to see such broad participation, and so much knowledge and experience gathered here today.

We are privileged to have with us:

- H.E. Vadym Chernysh, Minister of Temporary Occupied Territories and IDPs, Ukraine
- H.E. Momodu Kargbo, Minister of Finance Sierra Leone, co-chair International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State Building
- H.E. Axel Addy, Minister for Commerce and Industry, Liberia
- H.E. Deqa Yasin, Minister for Women's Affairs and Human Rights, Somalia TBC
- Dr Hanan Ashrawi, PLO Executive Committee Member, PLC Member

In addition, we have colleagues here today from a number of influential

think tanks and civil society groups from around the world, from institutions such as the World Bank and the United Nations, and from regional bodies, not least the African Union. A warm welcome to all of you!

The theme of this year's Forum is highly relevant. Asking ourselves "What works?" is a frank and honest recognition that we collectively need to redouble our efforts to build inclusive societies, prevent violent conflicts and sustain peace.

Friends, sadly we are once again meeting at a time of great unrest. Ongoing developments in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, South Sudan, Afghanistan and elsewhere have resulted in the largest humanitarian crisis in modern history. Conflicts are not only increasing in number, but are becoming more complex and violent.

Yet there is promise. Last year's inclusive peace agreement in Colombia may bring sustainable peace to a once conflict-ridden nation. Also in Somalia, the peaceful presidential election was the result of successful state and peacebuilding efforts – and effective cooperation between Somalia and its international partners.

There is a new resolve in the international community to make sustaining peace a priority. But we need to turn words into action. I see the need for improvement in three areas:

First, politically: we need to forge a new political consensus that puts conflict prevention and sustaining peace at the core of our efforts.

Second, practically: we need to improve the capacity of the multilateral system to work together across organisations, mandates and areas of responsibility to address the root causes and drivers of conflict. We need to ask ourselves: "What works?" – and be brave enough to answer truthfully.

Third, financially: we need to secure predictable and sustainable financing for prevention and sustaining peace. Investing in prevention is not only morally right. It is the smart, economically sound and sustainable thing to do.

However, in addition to this, we must urgently give increased attention to the linkages between climate change and security. The Security Council recently visited the Lake Chad region. As a result, UN Security Council Resolution 2349 made clear reference to the role of climate change as a threat multiplier and a driver of instability in the Lake Chad region. The urgent humanitarian

crisis in a country like Somalia also reflects these critical linkages.

It is important that we continue to improve reporting mechanisms and that we can draw on expertise and research to make decisions based on facts. The UN system needs an institutional home, where an integrated approach can be used. Sweden therefore supports the appointment of a Special Representative on Climate and Security.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this Forum provides a unique opportunity for frank and open discussions on contemporary peacebuilding. We need to learn from our collective successes and failures. I am proud to represent a feminist foreign policy that aims to build international political momentum in support of effective and inclusive conflict prevention.

Minister Lövin and I are therefore happy to co-host this Forum with SIPRI. SIPRI has long been a world-class think tank dedicated to disarmament and non-proliferation, and we are now pleased that it is also developing a unique niche within the broader agenda of peace and development. On that note, Minister Lövin and I would like, once again, to express our deepest gratitude to SIPRI for all its hard work in organising this Forum. We would also like to thank the outgoing chair of SIPRI, Ambassador Sven-Olof Petersson, and warmly welcome the incoming chair, Ambassador Jan Eliasson. We are indeed looking forward to continued fruitful cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen, over the next two days you will be discussing the future of peacekeeping operations, how to ensure inclusive peace processes, the complexity of violence, the humanitarian-development nexus and much more. I, for one, am very much looking forward to these discussions. I am sure they will help us advance sound policy and ensure that no one is left behind.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen, 25 April 2017

Published 25 April 2017

## Statement by Margot Wallström – Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank all of you for attending this important conference.

We meet here today in solidarity with the people in Yemen, who are suffering a rapidly escalating humanitarian crisis. We meet to make our pledges to a conflict that has far too long been neglected and forgotten by the global community, the human suffering too long uncared-for. Their hardship is difficult to imagine.

In light of developments, I would like to address three concrete points concerning how we can move forward.

1. Remind ourselves who are most affected by conflict and the financial pledges we are all here to make.
2. The necessity to respect the rules of armed conflict, International Humanitarian Law and guarantee humanitarian access.
3. Not forget that a political solution is the only way to reach sustainable peace and development in Yemen.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

As mentioned by Secretary General Guterres, the international community has so far been slow in reacting to the enormous humanitarian needs in Yemen, with only 15% of the Humanitarian Response Plan funded. We can change that here today. Our combined support for the response plan will



allow humanitarian operations in Yemen to reach millions of people in need, regardless of their politics, religion and ethnicity or their geographical location.

I would like to join my fellow co-hosts in highlighting the dire situation among Yemen's children. Recent reports from UNICEF and other humanitarian actors are painful reminders that children most often pay the heaviest price. More than 2.2 million children are acutely malnourished. An increasing number of children run the risk of being recruited as soldiers or facing sexual and gender-based violence. More than two thirds of all girls are married off before they reach 18 years.

The dramatic economic downturn and liquidity crisis further aggravate the situation.

Add to this the breakdown of health care services; an outbreak of cholera; the internal displacement of 2 million people. The combined picture leads to the conclusion that we must act now, and we must start with the most immediate needs.

In 2017, Sweden has already disbursed SEK 165 million (approximately USD 18 million) and is today pledging an additional SEK 70 million (approximately USD 7.8 million) for immediate disbursement within ten days. We are also substantial donors of un-earmarked core funding to UN agencies and humanitarian organisations operating in Yemen. Un-earmarked support is particularly important, since it allows UN organisations to act more flexibly and more rapidly.

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But an increase in resources will not be enough without immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access for delivery of life-saving assistance. This includes all seaports, particularly Hodeidah, and Sana'a airport. If these life lines are made unusable, there is little doubt that Yemen will face a famine of catastrophic scale. The United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism needs our full support.

Furthermore, aid workers are still risking their lives to deliver humanitarian assistance to people in need inside Yemen. Later today, we will have the opportunity to listen to representatives from different local NGOs that form part of the OCHA Humanitarian Country Team.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

We remind all parties to the armed conflict that attacks on aid workers are prohibited under International Humanitarian Law. All parties must respect the rules and principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution.

We also have to bear in mind the specific impact that the catastrophic situation in Yemen has on women and girls. A recent report from the United

Nations Security Council informal expert group on women, peace and security states that 17 000 incidents of gender-based violence have been reported since the conflict escalated, with few medical professionals trained to attend these kinds of injuries. Girls represent 63 per cent of the children who are forced out of school, and many previous gains in educational terms have been reversed.

We know that women's involvement increases the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance, as well as the likelihood of successful peace negotiations. The importance of mainstreaming gender equality throughout the whole humanitarian response, as well as the political dialogue, cannot be emphasised enough.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, Mr Secretary General, Let me finish by saying that increased humanitarian funding is a short-term solution. A political solution is the only way to achieve sustainable peace and development in Yemen. Sweden lends it full support to the UN Special Envoy and the process to reach a new cessation of hostilities and a negotiated political agreement.

On behalf of the Swedish Government, I thank you all for attending this event. Your presence sends an important signal to the people in Yemen that the international community cares.

Let's make sure that the result of our meeting will make a real and substantial difference for the many people in need.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Margot Wallström at seminar on hate speech and threats against women journalists

Published 18 April 2017

Stockholm, 2 December 2016. Check against delivery.

This year we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Swedish Freedom of the Press Act the first of its kind in the world. The significance of freedom of the press act cannot be overestimated.

The Act abolished censorship of all printed publications, and guaranteed public access to official documents and the right and opportunity to engage in political debate.

The Freedom of the Press Act has played a pivotal role in the development of the modern Swedish society.

Freedom of expression and opinion, transparency and access to information are prerequisites for democratic societies, where the rule of law applies and where everyone's human rights are respected.

These rights are also a prerequisite for innovation, debate, scrutiny and accountability – all valuable ingredients of a free and open society.

At the same time, we are acutely aware of the many challenges and difficulties facing the rights and fundamental freedoms that the Act set out to safeguard, and which are increasingly under attack around the world.

Today, in many places around the world, we see a repressive media climate, where disinformation and propaganda go hand in hand with deteriorating security and working conditions for journalists. Confidence in the media is decreasing, and the space human rights defenders and advocates of

democracy have to work in is shrinking. At the same time, repressive laws targeting journalists are being adopted in many states.

Being a journalist is often a dangerous profession to engage in, especially when trying to do so in the most risky of contexts.

The risks and dangers to female journalists are often higher than those encountered by their male counterparts.

Women face not only the implicit dangers of hostile environments, but of cultural and societal prejudice as well.

As we face a worsening working environment for female journalists, it is as important as ever to defend the human rights and freedoms we sometimes take for granted.

Our gathering here today is a celebration of all journalists who refuse to be silenced, with a special focus on female journalists.

Journalism is one of the professions that is most exposed to threats; this is especially true for female journalists. They are intimidated and harassed not only for being journalists, but also on grounds of their sex.

From a global perspective, violence against women is one of the most prevalent human rights violations. Despite the amount of attention given to the issue, it is regrettably as common as ever.

This constitutes not only a threat to women and qualitative journalism, but also to freedom of expression, equality and democracy. We must never forget that democracy thrives when a plurality of voices are heard. Unfortunately, many voices are under attack.

Female journalists can offer a different news agenda and different insight into regular news stories if they are allowed to operate and work without fear for their safety and well-being.

The plague of the violence against women is perhaps even more present in cyberspace. Attacks on female journalists online are overwhelmingly sexual in nature, including rape threats, cyberstalking, blackmail and disinformation.

While the opportunities offered by the internet vastly outweigh the challenges, there are still a number of issues to deal with. Technology has brought us many improvements and we are dependent on the internet in all

aspects of our lives. The internet has enabled easier and faster communication as well as borderless connections between people, and the free flow of ideas and empowerment of individuals.

But information technology has also blurred the line between private and public, and professional and non-professional, and has been used to threaten and keep female journalists living in fear. The internet has put women in the line of fire to an even greater degree. Online harassment is more dangerous because of its ability to spread around the world and because once it's online, it stays online.

From a Swedish perspective, we are convinced that the only way forward is to promote, protect and defend freedom of expression and opinion. We need to work continuously on different levels to ensure that these issues are never forgotten or ignored.

Journalism is a very effective means of countering disinformation and combatting incitement to violence and hatred.

It can be a strong antidote against all types of prejudices.

Allow me to mention a few examples of concrete action moving the issue forward: Last year, UNESCO adopted a resolution on safety for journalists presented by Sweden.

Sweden provides broad support to journalists and human rights defenders as part of our development cooperation.

Sweden is a driving force in implementing the UN action plan for the safety of journalists and combatting impunity.

Safety of journalists is also a recurring feature in the UN Human Rights Council as well as the General Assembly.

Through the Swedish development agency and the Swedish institute, we help fund journalist training and provide support to independent media outlets and investigative journalism.

On the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the Freedom of the Press Act and the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs has launched a communication campaign highlighting the benefits of freedom of expression and opinion, and transparency.

I feel truly privileged to be in this room with you all and take part in this significant event.

We must keep in mind that doing the right thing is not always easy, it can come at a high price, but in our continuous global struggle for freedom of expression and opinion, as well as for democracy, we must not deviate from this path.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at the conference "Supporting the future of Syria and the region" in Brussels

Published 05 April 2017

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, 5 April 2017. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

As we meet here today we are all outraged by yesterday's chemical weapons attack on Idlib. These deplorable acts of violence can never be accepted. Our efforts and commitment to providing humanitarian support remain strong, but we should be clear that in the face of chemical attacks on children our humanitarian efforts will never suffice. We cannot offset or undo gas attacks with humanitarian support. Acts like these are indefensible and stand in outrageous contradiction to the efforts we are gathered here to support and enhance. A political solution as outlined in resolution 2254, including a political transition, remains the only way forward. Sweden fully supports the UN-led talks in Geneva and efforts to ensure the full and effective participation of women at the negotiation table.

Sweden will continue to provide support to the humanitarian operations in Syria and the neighbouring states. Let me tell you briefly what we have done so far. Since 2011, we have provided USD 278 million in humanitarian aid. This is in addition to our unearmarked core budget support to the UN humanitarian organisations and the Central Emergency Response Fund. As a complement to our substantial humanitarian aid we have pledged USD 200 million through our five-year Syria crisis strategy, aimed at building resilience.

The number of Syrians displaced and suffering from the consequences of conflict is increasing and, in addition to our substantial humanitarian aid and resilience support, we have provided protection in Sweden for more than 140 000 asylum seekers from Syria since the beginning of the conflict, which, while not at the same level as the millions hosted by Syria's neighbours, is the highest number per capita outside the region. Today, I can also present an additional USD 35 million in 2017 that will be allocated, and we expect to increase our support further later this year.

We remain concerned about violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. Therefore, Sweden provides support to the International Impartial Investigation Mechanism (IIIM) for the investigation of grave international crimes in Syria as well as the UN's and OPCW's Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM).

Three months after the ceasefire agreement, we are seeing an escalation of violence. More needs to be done by the Astana guarantors to ensure protection of civilians as well as sustained humanitarian access.

We will continue to provide humanitarian aid and support efforts to build resilience. But it must be made clear that the only sustainable way of addressing the needs of vulnerable Syrians is by finding a political solution to the conflict. We owe this to the millions of Syrians who continue to suffer from the consequences of conflict.

Thank you.





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström in Washington 22 March 2017

Published 23 March 2017

The speech was held in Washington at a ministerial meeting with coalition partners in the fight against ISIL/Daesh.

Colleagues,

Let me first thank our host, Secretary of State Tillerson, for bringing us together here today.

Our first priority is to push back ISIL/Daesh militarily.

My government has taken a decision to increase our military presence in Iraq. This will be sent to parliament for a decision during the spring.

Currently, we have 35 people involved in training and education of the Iraqi security forces.

The new decision is aimed at doubling this number.

However, ISIL/Daesh cannot be defeated by military means only.

I would like to make four points:

**First:** last year we provided USD 46 million in humanitarian aid to the UN-led response to the Syria crisis and USD 22 million to Iraq.

The UNDP's Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilisation in Iraq received USD 10 million – double the previous year's contribution.

UN funds and programmes receive large core contributions from Sweden. In fact, we rank among the top three core donors.

Currently, we are developing a new five-year strategy for Iraq. It will focus on resilience, peacebuilding, and gender equality and female participation. The strategy will encompass up to USD 100 million, and will be launched in the second half of 2017.

**Second, we can only tackle terrorism durably if we are sensitive to the political context.**

Root causes need to be addressed. National reconciliation, political reforms and inclusiveness are crucial.

In the short term, the stabilization efforts by the Iraqi government and the UN in the liberated areas are vital. As more areas are being liberated from ISIL/Daesh the need for longer term stabilization and civilian support is increasing. EU is well placed to provide such civilian support in the security sector.

For the longer term, the reform efforts initiated by Prime Minister Abadi are very encouraging. Their effective implementation needs to be ensured. The Iraqi government has our full support in these endeavors.

**Third, everyone needs to feel they have a stake in the future.**

The experiences and voices of women, in particular, must be taken into account to build sustainable peace, and to mitigate risks of radicalisation leading to violent extremism/terrorism.

Young people are vulnerable to ISIL/Daesh propaganda, and must be included in society so as to avoid falling into the marginalisation trap that might lead to violent extremism.

**Forth, we need to close gaps that can be used for terrorist financing.**

We must do our utmost to hinder financial crime, including money laundering – an enterprise in which ISIL/Daesh is involved.

And let me ask, how do we put an end to trafficking of Yazidi women and girls? How do we cut off fuel supply for vehicles used by ISIL/Daesh?

We know that terrorist financing is difficult to track because it involves small

amounts of money.

Even small amounts of money can have deadly consequences, but there are ways to fight back.

Recently, a Swedish man associated with ISIL/Daesh was convicted for running a crowdfunding enterprise. He had encouraged people on Facebook to fund projects linked to terrorist activities.

For Sweden this is a unique sentence. And although it has yet not gained legal force, I hope this sends a clear message that Sweden does not accept its citizens using the internet to boost the income of terrorist organisations.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech on feminist foreign policy at the 350-year anniversary of Lund University

Published 07 March 2017

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, 7 March 2017. Check against delivery.

'A feminist foreign policy and diplomacy as a tool for peace and gender equality'

Ladies and gentlemen, dear students,

'Is the world becoming a better place?'

That's one of the questions being asked during all the seminars as Lund University celebrates its 350th anniversary.

So let me first say warm congratulations, and let me assure you that I am always very happy to be back here among all the students.

And I am sure that this question – 'Is the world becoming a better place?' – has been discussed by generations of students while walking the streets and parks of Lund.

Throughout history, the answer has been both yes and no. Just like in 2017, rapid progress has gone hand in hand with setbacks.

Today we are faced with several protracted conflicts, the continued scourge of terrorism, systematic sexual and gender-based violence, and the largest refugee crisis in modern history.

It is clear that the international system has failed in its core task of ensuring peace and security for all. The world needs to change its approach. Adhering to the status quo is not an option.

In order to break the status quo and make the world a better place, we need gender equality. The fantastic phrase 'women's rights are human rights' must become the spine of all our political work.

I am the Foreign Minister of the world's first officially feminist government, consisting of 12 men and 12 women. And since my government assumed office two years ago we have pursued a feminist foreign policy.

In this way we are trying to shift our focus from response to prevention. We are changing our approach from reactive to proactive.

And prevention can never be successful without a proper analysis of how situations and developments affect men, women, boys and girls differently.

\* \* \*

Friends,

Allow me to continue by describing what our feminist foreign policy is, how we apply it, and what difference it has made so far.

The concluding section will provide some very practical examples of how we use diplomacy as a tool for peace and gender equality.

So: when describing a feminist foreign policy, it is useful to start with three fundamental 'Rs': rights, representation and resources.

Rights are at the core of our policy. Human rights are also women's rights. The fact that such a simple statement still causes so much controversy is just more proof of how much a feminist foreign policy is needed.

When it comes to the second 'R', representation, we start by asking a simple question: who makes decisions?

Whether in foreign or domestic policy, or economic decision-making, we see that women are chronically under-represented in positions of influence.

Resources refer to the need to apply a gender perspective, also when distributing aid and other resources. If you want to understand why women

and men are treated differently worldwide, you should – as the saying goes – follow the money. Are women in charge of their own economic situation and their own resources?

For example: in 2014, humanitarian funding for UN-wide crisis response totalled more than USD 9 billion. But only 4 per cent of projects were gender-specific. This needs to change.

The three Rs are all anchored in a fourth one: reality.

Reality is about getting the facts and analysis right from the outset.

What does the situation on the ground look like if we include 100 per cent of the population?

In this time of misinformation campaigns and 'alternative facts', the need to base policies on knowledge and experience is perhaps greater than ever.

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The second question that must be asked is how the feminist foreign policy is applied.

In practice, our feminist foreign policy means that:

we apply a systematic gender perspective in everything we do; we use our foreign policy tools to promote gender equality; and we use gender equality to advance our foreign policy objectives.

So, how do we do this within the Swedish Foreign Service?

Let me highlight four operational ingredients.

First: **leadership**.

I proclaimed the feminist foreign policy the same day I took office in October 2014.

I have assumed leadership as Minister. This is a necessary condition, but it is not enough.

Leadership is needed at all other levels of the Ministry.

I have made it crystal clear to all heads of department that they are

responsible for the gender mainstreaming of their own and their staff's work and workplace.

**Second: ownership.**

Two months after the launch of the feminist foreign policy, we sent a letter to all parts of the Foreign Service outlining our strategic thinking and inviting everyone – from Copenhagen to Kabul – to get back to us with their reflections and input.

This was a key step. A policy that had been introduced 'top-down' now became home-grown.

This also spurred colleagues from different policy areas and geographical locations to discuss gender equality and increase their understanding of possibilities for action.

The reports from these discussions gave us a solid base as we continued to develop and operationalise our policy.

It is essential for all parts of any organisation to have a feeling of ownership if a new policy, such as the feminist foreign policy, is to continue over time.

**Third: direction.**

The suggestions from colleagues all over the world were channelled into our first feminist foreign policy action plan, launched in November 2015.

This action plan now directs our work, outlining 'the hows', 'whos' and 'whats'.

It includes six long-term goals and yearly focus areas reflecting the most pressing challenges.

The action plan has been incorporated into the Foreign Service's operational plan.

This means that work on gender mainstreaming is followed up and measured in our regular processes within all of the Ministry's activities.

And as you all know, this is crucial to keeping momentum in any large bureaucracy.

The yearly process enables us to learn and benefit from consultations and new data. (If you want to have a look at our feminist foreign policy action plan, you can easily access it on the website of the Swedish Government).

Fourth: **support**.

Gender mainstreaming is everyone's responsibility.

However, a focal point function is also necessary.

We therefore have an Ambassador for gender equality, who is also the coordinator of the feminist foreign policy.

The Ambassador and her team coordinate the development and follow-up of the action plan.

They develop support material, including eLearning. They collect and disseminate good practices, connect across policy areas and contribute to developing policy, communication and incentive structures.

For instance, we now award a regional diploma to an embassy that has implemented the policy in a particularly outstanding way.

Moreover, the Ambassador has a specific point of contact among the advisors in my office in order to facilitate all important procedures.

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However: to talk about methods and ways of implementation is one thing. The main question, and our third question here, is what difference a feminist foreign policy has made so far.

The overall result has been a cultural shift within our Foreign Service, as an organisation.

Two years of feminist foreign policy have generated important outcomes.

Our efforts have contributed to some 20 countries drawing up laws and proposals to strengthen gender equality; to hundreds of thousands of women and girls avoiding unsafe abortions and unwanted pregnancies; and to some 90 local communities abandoning the practice of female genital mutilation.

On rights, we are proud that our chairmanship of the Call to Action initiative



has helped to increase the number of partners.

We are now 66 States and organisations having made over 265 commitments to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in emergencies.

Regarding representation, we have promoted women as actors in peace-making through the provision of resources, connections, capacity-building and advisory support from our Swedish network of women mediators.

When it comes to resources, the Swedish Government is providing substantive support to promote gender equality and women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights.

As an example, a gender equality perspective should be integrated in all assistance provided by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

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Friends,

After this overview of our feminist foreign policy, I would like to describe more specifically how we are strengthening Sweden's capacity to contribute to inclusive and sustainable peace processes.

First of all, a support function for dialogue and peace processes has been established at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Stockholm. Moreover, a handful of embassies in conflict areas will receive extra support.

The aim is to strengthen Sweden's involvement throughout the conflict cycle and more effectively address the root causes fuelling conflicts.

The modern mediation landscape is multi-dimensional. We are witnessing a proliferation of actors engaged in inter- and intra-state conflicts. This affects both when and how Sweden should contribute to peace processes.

The classic 'solo mediator' is less frequently called upon. What we see more often today are different forms of partnership with other peacekeeping actors, such as the UN, EU, AU, OSCE, the Red Cross and, not least, local organisations. In this way, political, personal or financial aid is provided.

We also need to think creatively about the role of mediator and all the different instruments available. Here are some current examples of available

Swedish instruments:

- We have embassies and development assistance in 13 conflict-affected countries, including Colombia, Afghanistan and Somalia.
- We have special envoys for the peace efforts in the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa and Syria.
- We have conflict-secured all of our development assistance with a focus on peace-building.
- A new development strategy for peaceful and inclusive societies is expected to be complete by summer. The strategy builds on Sustainable Development Goal 16 and has a special focus on conflict prevention, women, peace and security, as well as rapid support for peace processes.
- I have taken the initiative to form a Swedish female mediation network. The network consists of nine experienced women ready to promote inclusive peace processes and assist local women peace-builders. The Mediation Network has, for example, contributed to peace efforts in Syria, Burundi, Afghanistan and Somalia. In Afghanistan, a dialogue and mediation training with local Afghan women peace-builders have been particularly successful. The Swedish network is a component of a Nordic mediation network.
- The image of Sweden as an honest, serious and long-term partner enables us to provide good offices and to use Sweden as a platform for talks between different parties.
- Sweden's broad engagement and partnership with multilateral organisations, such as the UN, EU, AU and OSCE provide good opportunities to promote peaceful resolution of conflicts, both in the field and in New York, Brussels and Geneva.
- We have a partnership with a series of mediation organisations, such as Interpeace, Intermediate, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, the European Institute of Peace, Conciliation Resources and the Crisis Management Initiative.
- Swedish organisations, such as the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), often provide unique input and knowledge of individual peace efforts.

We should also recognise that lessons learned from peace efforts in

Colombia, the Philippines, Somalia and Liberia are central to our efforts.

Because we know that transparency is a prerequisite for dealing with the causes of conflicts and for peace to last.

A successful peace process is not only a question of a cease-fire or a formal agreement between the warring parties.

It is also about justice, reconciliation, reconstruction, education, health, political access and distribution of resources. A sustainable peace process creates the conditions for stable and legally secure institutions that promote social, economic and political development for all.

Within the framework of our feminist foreign policy, we will therefore further develop support for women's meaningful participation in peace efforts before, during and after conflicts.

For me, it is obvious that women must be included equally in all parts of society. When research so clearly shows that gender-equal societies are also less likely to end up in conflict, it is no longer possible to justify why half the population should be excluded from discussions about their own future.

We will also strengthen our ability to build peace from below. Formal peace processes that exclude either the victims of the conflict or local peace-builders have limited opportunities to be sustained over time.

By linking processes at local, national and international level, one can lay the foundation for legitimate agreement that takes the root causes of conflict into account.

Inclusive peace processes are therefore not only an issue of rights. They are also smart policy.

\* \* \*

Friends,

When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, there were only two women on the Human Rights Commission responsible for drafting the declaration.

Many of you know of the first one, Eleanor Roosevelt. The other one was Hansa Mehta, an Indian writer and independence activist.

When the Commission proposed the phrase 'all men are brothers', Hansa Mehta objected. She noted that this could be interpreted in some countries as an opportunity to exclude women.

Hansa's insistence on incorporating an expression that fully recognised the equality of women and men resulted in the text finally adopted for Article 1 that reads: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

Each of you individually, and all of you collectively, have a sphere of influence that is within your control at a personal level, in your interactions with others, and in organisations where you might be active.

Bringing women into decision-making, applying gender analyses, calling for and collecting gender-disaggregated data – these things can be done everywhere, at universities and at foreign ministries.

In different ways, we can all raise our voices and play a part.

Sometimes it will take 100 years and millions of men and women to change the course of history.

Sometimes it takes one person and one moment.

Hansa Mehta was just one woman, but she had a seat at the table and her actions ensured that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights became truly universal.

When I look at you, I see that the room is full of sisters and brothers to Hansa Mehta.

The time has come for gender equality.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Conference on Disarmament

Published 01 March 2017

Geneva 1 March 2017. Check against delivery.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Two years ago I had the honour of addressing the Conference on Disarmament. On that occasion, I stated that we needed to move further and faster on nuclear disarmament, and that one step in that direction would be to finally overcome the impasse that for far too long had paralyzed the CD.

Much to my regret I feel compelled to repeat these messages today.

Over the past two years we have witnessed an increase in unfilled commitments, in polarization, and in the inability of multilateral forums to conduct their mandated work – the CD being a case in point, the 2015 NPT Review Conference another one.

Disarmament diplomacy now has to be conducted with a clear sense of urgency – an urgency for which there is ample justification.

Sweden as a small militarily non-aligned country is dependent on a world order based on international law. That is why we react strongly when the European or global security order is challenged.

A particularly dangerous aspect is the continuing existence of nuclear weapons. Although the number of warheads has come down substantially from the 1986 all-time high, they remain at levels that put the survival of the human race at risk.

The last multilateral nuclear disarmament treaty negotiated in this room, the CTBT, has yet to enter into force. The strong norm against testing established by this treaty is time and time again being challenged by the DPRK tests.

Instead of disarmament, the prevailing trend seems to be modernization of nuclear arsenals, almost at any cost, taking us even further from the fulfillment of the NPT promise of a world without nuclear weapons – the only true guarantee against the horrors of nuclear war.

In the fringes of the debate, you even come across reckless talk about when the actual use of nuclear weapons would be justified. Development of lower-yield battlefield weapons could only serve the purpose of dangerously blurring the line between conventional and nuclear warfare.

So we cannot afford to lose more opportunities. Time is running out, as symbolized by the recent announcement by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists that the doomsday clock has been adjusted by 30 seconds. It is now two and a half minutes to midnight. That is the second highest alert status since its inception in 1947.

Mr. President,

Have there been any positive movements? I would say - yes. The most positive development during recent years is the recognition that nuclear weapons cannot be reconciled with international humanitarian law. Human beings, not states, have been placed at the forefront of the discussion. We all know that nuclear weapons must never be used, and that any use would have catastrophic consequences.

In Japan the survivors of the atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki are referred to as Hibakusha. I met a group of hibakusha's during my visit to the 2015 NPT-conference in New York. They work tirelessly to educate young people about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. The memory of what disaster even a single nuclear attack could bring must never be forgotten. We all bear a responsibility for this.

Sweden looks forward to participating in the negotiations on a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. I am aware that not all states share our view on these negotiations, and that some, regrettably, do not intend to partake. Let me explain our perspective.

Sweden has always participated in multilateral negotiations related to disarmament. We see no reason not to do so this time. We feel strongly that we all have an obligation to contribute in a multilateral UN negotiation. . In a deteriorating security environment we must take every opportunity to seek progress in nuclear disarmament. And we cannot ignore the humanitarian perspective. But will these negotiations be successful in achieving nuclear disarmament? The fact is that we do not know. But we all have an obligation to try. And I estimate that the norm against the use of nuclear weapons and against the weapons themselves stands a good chance of being strengthened. Some argue that the prohibition treaty process will be divisive and harmful to the NPT. My view is that the prohibition can be beneficial by injecting new political energy into the debate. Something urgently needed. Let me also be clear that Sweden sees the prohibition in the context of the NPT framework, not as a substitute for it.

Let me mention three other important recent developments. One was the decision to set up a high level expert preparatory group on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. This is a question long overdue and should have been dealt with by the CD. But let us now hope that the work of this group will be followed by concrete action. Sweden looks forward to participating in the group together with Canada and other states.

The second positive development was the First Committee showing very strong support for the resolution on de-alerting, introduced by Sweden together with other members of the de-alerting group. In today's world of unimaginably high information flows, fatal decisions can be made within minutes. Therefore, more than ever, decreasing the readiness of nuclear weapon arsenals are crucial. And last but not least, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed with Iran, and endorsed by the Security Council, is a crucial agreement that must not be put at risk by any party.

Mr. President,

In May, a new review cycle of the NPT starts, leading up to the Review Conference in 2020. That year will also mark the 50th anniversary of the NPT. No doubt, this treaty is the cornerstone for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. But it has not lived up to its full potential. There are serious flaws in the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments, and the responsibility falls heavily on the nuclear powers. They cannot continue to ignore the promise to disarm their nuclear arsenals. Russia and the United States must take the lead in restarting the reduction of nuclear weapons. There are also many other important measures the nuclear weapon

states could commit to in connection with the NPT Review Conference. Measures such as legally binding negative security guarantees, a ban on nuclear-armed cruise missiles, negotiations on tactical nuclear weapons. And maybe more important, risk reduction including de-alerting. I strongly encourage the nuclear weapon states to abandon hair trigger launch procedures , which are potentially destabilizing. Reduced operational readiness to avoid accidental nuclear use is in everybody's interest.

Mr. President,

Small Arms and Light Weapons kill half a million people every year. The majority of direct victims are men. Women, boys and girls also suffer from the violence caused by small arms and light weapons. Societies are being brutalised as illicit and uncontrolled weapons are in circulation, domestic and intimate-partner violence is increasing and the public space for women is reduced. We must all gain better control of these weapons including ammunition. The 2018 Review Conference on the UN Programme of Action on illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons will provide an important opportunity to strengthen our work against them.

Furthermore let me mention the important issue of chemical weapons. We appreciate that the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) for chemical weapons use in Syria was extended for another year. The decision by the Third Review Conference on Certain Conventional Weapons to set up a GGE on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems should also be recognised as an important step forward.

Mr. President,

My country has the privilege to serve on the United Nations Security Council this year and next year. The main task of the Council, and thereby our main task, is to preserve international peace and security and prevent future conflicts from emerging. In my view, sustainable security can only be attained through cooperation and disarmament. The lack of cooperation and disarmament has led to a more unstable and insecure world. This development must be turned around, not only for ourselves but even more so for the sake of the younger generation.

Let us now, through the ban negotiation and a proper implementation of the NPT, contribute to setting our world on a safer course.

Thank you, Mr. President.







Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Human Rights Council

Published 01 March 2017

Geneva, 1 March 2017. Check against delivery.

Mr President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to be able to once again address the Human Rights Council.

Equality is the foundation of the multilateral system that is the United Nations. It is the cornerstone of international law and human rights. All States are equal, so too are all the persons in this room and beyond.

Yet the winds of change are blowing. Unfortunately, the winds are not those of increased solidarity, understanding and multilateralism but rather those of xenophobia, prejudice and isolationism.

All of us, Sweden included, face continued challenges in ensuring the full respect for human rights.

Some argue that under the current circumstances, we should lower our ambitions concerning human rights; it is not realistic to push for their universal respect.

To them I say: human rights are not based on idealism. Human rights are based on binding obligations of international law. This is not the time to question what has already been agreed but to work together for their full and equal implementation.

The lessons learned by our predecessors in the ashes of a war-torn world were the very reasons for the creation of a multilateral system based on

unity, equality and the rule of law. In the words of Dag Hammarskjöld: "The UN was not created to bring us to heaven, but in order to save us from hell". Sweden will continue to fight tirelessly to reaffirm the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights for everyone. We will continue to reject any attempts by States to restrict human rights by referencing national laws, religions, customs or traditions.

And we will continue to defend the independence of the Council and its special procedures against all those who wish to undermine its legitimacy and possibility to act.

In order to promote and protect human rights globally, Sweden will later this spring publish reports regarding the current situation for human rights in all regions of the world. The Government has also recently handed over a communication to Parliament on our priorities regarding human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Mr President,

Two years ago I stood before you and declared that women's rights are human rights. But gender equality is still a vision rather than a reality in all parts of the world. Violence, oppression and systematic subordination are common place for countless persons, particularly women and children.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights are human rights. Based on Sweden's own experience, full respect for these rights is essential to achieve gender equality, full and equal participation in society, poverty reduction and social and economic development. These rights naturally have implications for a person's health. The role of midwifery is a key element in this regard as it allows women better access to maternal care. The Swedish campaign [Midwives4All](#) contributes in highlighting these aspects and rights which help save women's lives.

Sweden will continue to champion sexual and reproductive health and rights for all.

Mr President,

As members of the United Nations, we have all vowed to adhere to the principle of non-discrimination for everyone, everywhere.

The struggle against hatred, violence and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity has to remain high on our agenda. We cannot

sit idly by and watch as Governments actively engage in the promotion of hatred and violence against those most in need of protection. Discrimination can never be justified.

Mr President,

Again, it is because we are equal that we must all respect and protect each other's freedom of opinion and expression.

To defend these rights, the safety of journalists, bloggers, publishers, artists and union leaders is a paramount responsibility for us all.

Unfortunately, we witness an even growing number of reprisals, violence, imprisonments and murders committed against all those courageous enough to fight for the pursuit of human rights. Hence, we must all redouble our efforts to protect human rights defenders and allow civil society organisations greater protection and to combat the shrinking space.

In order to highlight the importance of freedom of opinion and expression, and to commemorate the 250th anniversary of freedom of expression in Sweden, I will later today open a Swedish exhibition here at the UN on this issue.

Mr President,

Sweden is committed to the promotion and protection of international law and human rights across the entire UN system, including in the Security Council.

As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Sweden will continue to advocate for the advancement of human rights, in particular women's human rights, as an essential component of conflict prevention and peacebuilding as well as in achieving a durable peace.

Violations of human rights are indeed a threat to international peace and security. It is time for the international community to act accordingly.

For it must be the will of "we the people of the United Nations" that in the end decides our common fate.

I thank you, Mr President.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Remarks by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at high level dialogue on sustaining peace and the 2030 Agenda

Published 25 January 2017 Updated 25 January 2017

United Nations, New York, 24 January. Check against delivery.

Mr President of the General Assembly, Mr Secretary-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

"We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war..."

These are the opening words of the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations.

This has been the mission of the United Nations since its very beginning.

We must therefore ask ourselves every day: what are we doing to prevent the 'scourge of war'? Are we doing enough? Can we do more?

I come straight from the Arctic Frontiers conference in Tromsø, where I participated yesterday and met scientists and experts that painted a bleak picture of environmental developments in the Arctic, not least developments related to climate change. We know that last year was the warmest one ever recorded on the earth. This has had particular impact on the Arctic – the cap of the world. In one of the panels in Tromsø yesterday, the moderator asked the panelists how they could sleep at night, knowing all which they know. One of the experts replied that he tried to look for hope-spots in the world.

I believe this is what we need to look for: hope-spots. Such as this meeting here today, where we meet to discuss what we can do better.

And this is exactly what we are here to discuss today: preventing conflict and finding synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace.

In these times of nationalism and fear, we can send a message of hope.

I would like to thank Mr Peter Thomson, President of the General Assembly, for convening this high-level dialogue on this most important matter.

I was greatly encouraged by the strong show of support at the open debate in the Security Council earlier this month on conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Secretary-General Guterres outlined a number of concrete measures aimed at strengthening the capacity of the UN system to detect and respond early to signs of looming crises.

We must continue to discuss how to improve for example reporting in order to detect early signs of conflict. And we must consider how to strengthen our will and capacity to take action when we receive reports. And we must explore how to make better use of the tools that we have, such as mediation and the good offices of the UN.

Opportunism and populism are strong forces in today's world. Peace and sustainable societies can never be taken for granted. The 2030 Agenda is a universal tool, and its universality requires all countries and all people to be involved in peacebuilding and prevention.

I would like to highlight four issues that I believe can make a difference to our efforts for the mutually reinforcing Sustaining Peace and the 2030 Agenda.

Strong institutions and good governance

Goal 16 emphasises that access to justice for all and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions are essential in promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. To achieve this goal, we need political commitment, inclusive and participatory governance, sound policies and legal frameworks, and effective development cooperation.

We can also learn from each other. South-south cooperation and peer learning are important. The g7+ group of fragile states has implemented an initiative called Fragile-to-Fragile (or F2F) cooperation. With their own experience of transitioning out of fragility, and Timor-Leste taking the lead, they successfully supported election registration in Guinea Bissau in 2014 and assisted the Ebola-struck countries of West Africa in 2015. In 2016, two missions were conducted to support democratic and peaceful developments in the Central African Republic. As co-chair of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding with Sierra Leone, the current chair of the g7+, Sweden continues to support these efforts.

## 2. Risk management, root causes, early warning – early action

Peacebuilding must be nationally owned and inclusive. We must focus on understanding risks (including risks related to climate change), addressing the root causes of conflict, and building peace from the ground up. We must make better use of the tools at our disposal, including dialogue and mediation.

We are only as strong as our partnerships. The UN should strengthen its collaboration with other partners, not least the World Bank. Through better coordination between UN entities in the field, joint analysis, planning and implementation frameworks for political, security, and development interventions based on national development plans, the UN can increase its impact on sustaining peace.

## 3. The role of women

This is the unfinished business of our time. We have seen how women's experiences and a civil society that includes women contribute to early warnings and alternative conflict resolution methods. When the whole of society is involved and both women and men have a voice, we stand a better chance of building a foundation for legitimate peace accords that create socially and economically sustainable societies.

## 4. The economy of prevention

Prevention is not only right – it is also the economically smart thing to do.

Imagine the costs if Gambia were to have been thrown into armed conflict. Instead with the use of good offices and the work of regional actors, including ECOWAS, this did not happen.

A society's economic situation is often a risk factor to consider when we look at early warning signs and root causes. More effective conflict prevention means that less of our development budgets will be spent on humanitarian assistance. By preventing conflicts, we can enable economic growth and reduce human suffering. Donors and financial institutions need to invest in peace and prevention.

The trend towards increased earmarking of contributions to UN activities will hinder multilateral flexibility and relevance in fragile contexts. Sweden is a top-five contributor to most of the UN funds and programmes. As a large donor of core support, we provide UN agencies with the kind of flexible and predictable funding needed to enhance capacities and enable a swift response to a sudden crisis.

Finally, the main responsibility lies with us, as UN Member States, to implement the 2030 Agenda in our countries, as well as the peace continuum, as the Secretary-General has put it. We need the UN to support us in this endeavour. The platform and the policy are there already. It is for us to implement.

Thank you.





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Remarks by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at Arctic Environment Forum

Published 24 January 2017 Updated 24 January 2017

Tromsö, 23 January 2017. Check against delivery.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

The past year was the warmest ever recorded on Earth. It broke the record set in 2015, which in turn broke the record set the previous year.

Preliminary statistics in 2016 show that temperatures rose by 1.3 degrees Celsius compared with pre-industrial levels. Behind the average temperature are great variations, with a disturbing increase in temperatures taking place closer to the poles.

Climate change is reality, already affecting our lives and societies. And remember that the emission of greenhouse gases is a cumulative process. The carbon budget is not like other budgets; we don't start anew with the New Year.

Scientists warn us of tipping points, of accelerating, even irreversible processes, of diminishing ice masses in the Arctic, of drastic changes in ocean currents, and of sizeable releases of greenhouse gas emissions from previously frozen soils and sediments.

I stated this morning, and I repeat it again: global warming, and its impact on the Arctic, is not just a potential environmental and ecological disaster. It could also very well develop into a security threat of global proportions.

In 2015, we came together worldwide in a remarkable demonstration of resolve with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on

climate change.

Over the past year, that determination was sustained as over a hundred states deposited their Paris Agreement ratification instruments, bringing it into force in record time.

As we translate these commitments into action, the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement present us with an equation that can only be resolved through a paradigm shift.

This shift needs to take place in the entire development of our societies and in our aspirations for providing a good life, not only for ourselves, but for future generations.

And the narrative, which is for us to project, should be a vision of hope. It must be based on scientific facts and knowledge, and it must be all-encompassing.

It stands in contrast to 'fact-free politics', to retreating into narrow-minded nationalism and to pitting one group against another.

This is the challenge that lies ahead of us as we look to 2017 and beyond.

\* \* \*

Dear friends,

Over the past two decades, Sweden has experienced a period of sustained economic growth while carbon emissions have fallen. In fact, we have seen worldwide that emissions have stayed flat while the global economy has grown.

This decoupling of energy sector emissions and economic growth should put to rest the argument that combating climate change requires accepting lower growth and lower standards of living.

It falls on us as governments to provide political leadership in setting out the direction and putting a legal framework into place.

We will look to the business community to provide innovation and respond to people's needs as enlightened consumers.

We will need a civil society which serves as a watchdog and as a channel for

people to demonstrate engagement.

The Paris Agreement set out some good principles. Global efforts must be built using a bottom-up approach. They must be transparent to generate trust and accountability, and they must be all-inclusive to bring success.

The call for the UN to 'deliver as one' has perhaps never been as imperative as right now.

The climate community and the development community must come together and find ways to engage in collaborative efforts on what promises to be a transformative agenda.

\* \* \*

Friends,

We know that the Arctic is particularly vulnerable to rising temperatures.

We also know that the main sources of CO2 emissions originate outside the Arctic region.

And we know as well that the solutions to the climate crisis in the Arctic must be dealt with primarily at global level.

But I believe the Arctic Council has a very important role to play in exploring region-specific measures and adding value to ongoing global efforts.

I therefore urge the Arctic Council Member States to explore ways to further strengthen the climate-related work of the Council.

Let us move forward together.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Arctic Frontiers: Nordic Cooperation in the Arctic

Published 23 January 2017 Updated 23 January 2017

Tromsø, 23 January 2017. Check against delivery.

Ladies and gentlemen, Nordic friends,

I am very much looking forward to the Norwegian presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers and I fully support your set of priorities.

Your emphasis on increased support for green innovations, regional integration, and digitalisation is also highly relevant for this part of the world.

I am convinced that our countries can lead the way towards a green, low-emission economy that is sustainable and equitable.

In times of increased global uncertainty, Nordic cooperation and coordination is more important than ever.

If we are united as a region on matters of shared interest, it will be easier to get others to listen to what we have to say – in the EU, in the UN and in other multilateral forums.

This will be particularly important in the coming years, with Sweden as a member of the UN Security Council, Norway's participation in G20 and Denmark presiding over the OECD Ministerial Meeting on foreign policy, economy and trade.

Sweden will take over the rotating presidency of the Nordic Council of

Ministers in 2018. We will of course build on the important work that has been done by previous presidencies, not least Norway.

We are still in an exploratory phase concerning our own priorities, and we are looking forward to a close dialogue with Norway to ensure continuity and long-term progress.

In 2018, Sweden will also chair the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Council of Baltic Sea States, which will provide good opportunities for increased synergies between our different regional forums. We also foresee close cooperation with the Finnish chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

\* \* \*

As we are gathered here in Tromsø, let me also say a few words on Nordic cooperation in the Arctic.

We all share an ambition to maintain the Arctic as a region of peace and stability.

We also have a common interest in dealing with the challenge of climate change and its dramatic effects on the region.

I encourage the Nordic countries to explore how to further strengthen the role of the Arctic Council in the processes of mitigation, adaptation and resilience.

I believe there is room for improvement, but we need to join forces in order to achieve results.

The Nordic Council of Ministers could very well support such ambitions. I welcome the Council's ongoing efforts to develop a new Arctic programme. It will provide a good base on which to further strengthen the Arctic dimension of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Ladies and gentlemen, Nordic friends,

The Arctic is already a showcase of constructive regional dialogue.

Let us also turn it into a role model for sustainable development and an ambitious climate policy.

Thank you.





Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Arctic Frontiers opening session in Tromsø

Published 23 January 2017 Updated 23 January 2017

Tromsø 23 January 2017. Check against delivery.

Let me first of all thank my Norwegian hosts for inviting me to this important event in wonderful Tromsø.

As a northerner myself, coming from Västerbotten, I feel a special affinity and commitment to this beautiful but fragile part of the world.

\* \* \*

The Arctic has in the past probably been considered a periphery by many.

This is now far from being true. Global developments have put the region at the centre of international attention.

So, when dealing with the Arctic of today we are dealing with high politics in the true sense of the concept.

The reasons are primarily: (1) climate change, (2) the vast economic potential in the Arctic, and (3) security related developments globally.

\* \* \*

The Arctic is the epicentre of the global climate crisis.

Last year, a new alarming record was set when the average November

temperature approached 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level. The limits set out in the Paris Agreement have thus partially already been reached in this part of the world.

And compared to 2006, the November icecap has shrunk by 800 000 square kilometres, almost the size of two Swedens.

I could continue to give you more examples, like reminding you of those days last year when the temperature in parts of the Arctic approached 20 degrees above normal levels.

But we have enough examples, and the scientific findings are robust enough to conclude that a climate crisis in the Arctic is not a future scenario. It is going on as we speak.

So, let me be clear:

Global warming and its effects on the Arctic is not only a potential environmental and ecological disaster. It could also very well develop into a security threat of global proportions.

We must therefore step up our ambitions to combat climate change at all possible levels.

Sweden has taken concrete initiatives to strengthen the cooperation on climate issues in the Arctic Council.

I know that other countries, not least Norway and Finland, fully share our strong commitments.

The only sensible choice for the future is to embark on a paradigm shift in the development of societies and in our aspirations for providing a good life, not only for ourselves but for future generations.

\* \* \*

The people in the north, including the indigenous peoples, have the same right to economic and social development as the rest of our countries.

It is crucial however that this development is sustainable.

Supporting innovations in green technology and the use of best practices throughout the production cycle is therefore essential.



In this respect, I am rather optimistic. I think that we in many sectors have reached the point where there is a 'business case' for sustainable solutions.

Reopening coal mines belongs in the past. Producing steel without CO2-emissions, as done by our largest steel manufacturing company SSAB, is the future.

As politicians, our responsibility is to create proper incentives to strengthen this trend.

I am convinced that the Nordic countries, with their highly innovative Arctic regions, are ideally placed to assume global leadership in this respect.

In this context, I warmly welcome ongoing initiatives to further strengthen cooperation at various levels between the Arctic regions.

\* \* \*

Finally, I would like to highlight the importance of keeping the Arctic as a region of peace and stability built on the respect of international law including UNCLOS.

The Arctic Council is a unique platform for constructive dialogue and we should seek ways to strengthen the Council further.

But I also want to highlight the very important 'people to people' cooperation within the Barents framework.

To strengthen cross-border ties between civil societies in our Barents and Arctic regions is a true investment in peace and security.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at the conference for peace in the Middle East

Published 15 January 2017 Updated 15 January 2017

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the international conference for peace in the Middle East, Paris 15 January 2017. Check against delivery.

Dear Colleagues and Excellencies,

I am very pleased to be here today together with more than 70 countries and organisations gathered in order to save and promote the two-state solution.

Let me start by commending my esteemed French colleague Mr. Ayrault and ambassador Vimont for the impressive leadership shown by taking this initiative. I realize the challenging work that has gone into this initiative. Now we have a unique opportunity to try and meet the expectations of the region. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Secretary Kerry for his strong engagement.

We meet with a sense of urgency. And we are here today to renew our efforts on one of the most complex and longstanding conflicts. On Tuesday, Sweden as the current president of the UN Security Council will chair the next debate on the Middle East peace process. This peace process has been a Swedish priority for decades.

I would like to make three points : The two-states solution, land to build on and the importance of civil society.

**1. Firstly, the two-state solution must become a reality.** The legitimate aspirations of both parties must be met through direct bilateral negotiations.

Meanwhile, we must abstain from any actions pre-judging the outcome of future negotiations, such as the status of Jerusalem. I believe a momentum has finally been created to break the dead-lock, let us assume responsibility and go from words to action, respecting international law and human rights. My Government recognized Palestine in 2014. This was a logical step not only to recognize the Palestinians right to self-determination, but also a way of making the two parties less unequal in future negotiations.

**2. Secondly, there must be land to build on, to consolidate a democratic, viable and sovereign Palestinian state,** living peacefully side by side with Israel. When I visited Palestine last month, everyone was clinging to their maps. In Palestine maps are everything, because they show how Palestine is rapidly shrinking. I could feel the Palestinian frustration over the deteriorating situation, where everyday life is affected: Trade, fishing and the farmer I met who could not even reach his own olive trees. There was also a feeling of abandonment by the international community. In this respect, the recent Security Council resolution 2334 was truly a milestone, highlighting the serious threat to the two-state solution.

**3. Thirdly, we must do all that we can to recreate hope about a better future which involves civil society. Women and youth must be part of this.** Youth born after the Oslo-agreement don't believe in a two-state solution. This message was clear when Sweden led the consultations with some 150 CSO:s in our working group for civil society in Israel and Palestine, as part of the French initiative. Rebuilding trust between the two peoples is necessary and urgent in order to revive prospects for peace. To rekindle a public debate on this is of paramount importance. Sweden stands ready to host a CSO-Forum this spring.

I believe that the vision of the two-state solution has been re-energized. Now we must stay engaged and make sure that today's participation is a commitment to genuine continuation and follow-up. Let us send a clear message that we are here to support and encourage the parties to reach a two-state solution. I feel privileged to be part of our joint effort in re-creating hope.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at ministerial debate in the Security Council on conflict prevention and sustaining peace

Published 10 January 2017 Updated 10 January 2017

Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at ministerial debate in the Security Council on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. Check against delivery.

Mr. Secretary-General,

Thank you for reminding us of the achievements of the United Nations over the last 70 years, and for laying out your vision of a UN equipped to respond to the conflicts and instability that today affect the lives of millions.

A close and proactive working relationship between the Secretary-General and the Council is the cornerstone of this organisation's ability to deliver lasting peace and security. We look forward to forging a strong and trusting relationship with you, not least to improve the UN's capacity to take early action to prevent violent conflict.

We have discussed conflict prevention, today's topic, many times before in this Chamber. But progress is meager. I will speak about how this needs to change.

Mr. Secretary-General, Fellow members of the Council,

2016 exposed the urgent need for a global recommitment to multilateral solutions to conflict and to collaborative security – and specifically to the prevention of conflict. The horror in Syria and Yemen, and situations such as the instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, dominate this Council's work. Can we afford an ever-growing list of crises slipping into violent conflict and needless human misery?

UN's humanitarian and peacekeeping instruments have come under immense pressure. 22.2 billion USD in humanitarian appeals. Over 100,000 UN peacekeepers. Meanwhile, research shows that measures to peacefully prevent conflict cost, on average, just a tenth of post-conflict recovery efforts. Investing in prevention is not only morally right. It is the smart, economically sound and sustainable thing to do.

Prevention requires addressing the root causes of conflict and instability before they reach the front pages or this Council's agenda. It calls for inclusive nationally led processes that build strong institutions; and that are supported by a 'whole of organisation' commitment. The Sustaining Peace agenda, together with the Sustainable Development Goals, provides the platform and the master plan.

At the same time, Chapter VI of the Charter, on pacific settlement of disputes, requires the parties to a dispute to seek solutions through peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation or judicial settlement.

We have the tools. What we need now is a new political consensus in support of prevention.

Let me highlight some areas for priority actions that can underpin it:

Firstly, make prevention a priority for the whole UN system. Hold each entity accountable for its part in contributing. Ensure that the UN works closely with other international, regional and sub-regional actors. A good example is the current joint efforts, by ECOWAS and the UN Regional Office for West Africa and the Sahel, regarding The Gambia.

Secondly, improve the capacity of the United Nations to recognise and address the root causes and drivers of conflict by working together across the UN system's pillars, mandates and agencies. In this regard, we are encouraged by the concrete steps you have already taken, Secretary-General, to make the Secretariat work more efficiently.

Thirdly, improve system-wide analysis and welcome independent, authoritative advice from the Secretary-General, including on new and emerging threats and risks, such as climate change, to improve our collective strategic planning and response. Tell us what we need to know, not what we want to hear.

Fourthly, harness the agency of women to create sustainable peace through inclusive processes. Experiences shared through a network of female peace mediators that I have initiated, confirm the importance of inclusiveness.

Finally, recognise, in the words of the Secretary-General, that there can be no humanitarian solution for a political crisis. Humanitarian action can never be a substitute for political dialogue and mediation.

Colleagues,

We should heed the Secretary-General's call for a "surge in diplomacy for peace".

In order to do so, Sweden commits to contributing to a Security Council that empowers the Secretary-General to take timely, decisive and effective action to resolve disputes and prevent conflicts before they begin.

I hope that other Council members can join us in adopting this approach. We will do our utmost to create an atmosphere of open, respectful and honest dialogue around this table.

Secretary-General,

We have heard your call for effective conflict prevention. We know that for you to be effective, you need the political support of Member States.

We therefore commit to a new consensus on prevention. We commit to overcome our differences in pursuit of the common good.

We owe this to the United Nations and to our constituencies.

We owe it to the people and nations of the world.

Let us resolve to put peace first.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the Swedish Committee Against Antisemitism

Published 10 November 2016 Updated 09 November 2016

## Check against delivery.

Friends,

I am very pleased to be here today, to engage with you and to underline the importance of the Swedish Committee against Anti-Semitism.

Thank you so much for inviting me to speak to you.

I will begin by outlining how the Government fights anti-Semitism in our own country. I will then offer some of my views on anti-Semitism as a global problem. And I will conclude with a few words about the need for peace in the Middle East.

\* \* \*

We are witnessing an increase in intolerance and hatred in Sweden, around Europe and the rest of the world – on the internet, in the streets, and around religious institutions.

This intolerance is directed at minority groups such as Jews, but it is a threat to all of us, and to the democratic societies that we Europeans have historically fought hard to build.

The Government recognises that civil society actors like you are absolutely crucial in the fight against anti-Semitism and all forms of racism, hatred and

intolerance.

Sweden is a pluralistic and democratic country – and we are determined to protect these core values of our culture and society.

Jewish life is part of Swedish life, and Jewish culture is an important thread in our European social and cultural fabric.

Everyone living in Sweden should be able to lead a life based on equality, safety and dignity – and without fear or threat when practising one's peaceful religion. The right of religious freedom and belief is a fundamental human right.

A range of actions are taken to protect Jewish life in Sweden, with particular focus on education, media literacy, knowledge about history and the Holocaust, and on strengthening democracy, building civil society, enhancing security for religious institutions – to name the most important.

Moreover, the Government is working on a new national plan to combat racism and hate crime, which also addresses the anti-Semitism that the Jewish community is subjected to.

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Friends,

Let me move on to my second point. Anti-Semitism is a global problem, and not limited to any national setting or regional context.

For centuries, Jews have been the target of unfair blame, wrongful accusations, senseless hatred and violence – simply because they are Jews.

Anti-Semitism has deep and historical roots and it has taken many different forms.

This 'hatred of the other' has always had both local and transnational characteristics.

But with the advent of the internet, new borderless environments have been created in which age-old conspiracy theories can take additional forms.

Fighting anti-Semitism online is a huge challenge for the open and democratic world.



Here, governments need to cooperate with the media industry, civil society and specialists.

The EU Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online is an important step, but much remains to be done in terms of monitoring, implementation, accountability and enforcement.

Continued international cooperation is important. The EU, the United Nations and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance are vital in this work.

Bilateral consultations and cooperation with Israel, the United States and partners in Europe remain a priority.

Anti-Semitism must also be viewed within a larger context of hate and intolerance, online and offline.

We see how anti-Semitism flourishes in the same environment as violent extremism – in spaces where democratic values are replaced by violence.

The ongoing wars around the world, continued terrorist attacks against cities in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Europe, and the ongoing refugee crisis underline all too clearly the need to address the root causes of intolerance, hatred, violence and armed conflict.

Through international cooperation – in the EU and the United Nations, with education, legal measures, and enhanced security – we must devote our efforts to long-term confidence-building, conflict resolution and a culture of dialogue with respect for human rights in all contexts.

It is clear that no single country can solve these problems alone.

And it is clear to us that no set of countries or governments can solve these issues without working in close cooperation with civil society organisations.

An active civil society is key in this endeavour; education and dialogue are, without doubt, the most important cornerstones of a peaceful and tolerant society.

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Friends,

I will conclude by saying a few words about the Israel-Palestinian conflict and the need for peace in the Middle East.

We see quite clearly that when there is an upsurge in violence in this conflict, the situation of Jews living in Swedish cities is affected.

Jews come under attack – and are accused and threatened because of actions that they have no part in, and sometimes don't support.

Anti-Semitic violence on our streets is linked to the situation in Israel and Palestine.

A sustainable solution to this long-standing conflict in the Middle East is urgently needed.

Sweden supports a two-state solution in which the peaceful co-existence of Israel and Palestine becomes a reality.

In our analysis, recognising the state of Palestine was an important step towards a two-state solution and a bid to break the deadlock and status quo of years of failed negotiations.

The two-state solution, we believe, requires the negotiating parties to be on an equal footing.

Many people in Palestine have experienced nothing but conflict in their lifetimes, and any hope of a different future is steadily disappearing.

Our recognition of Palestine was therefore also an endeavour to restore hope.

Meanwhile, Sweden remains a steadfast and good friend of Israel.

Calling our foreign policy anti-Semitic – as some have done – is completely unacceptable and unfounded.

Friends,

I would like to wish you a very successful and rewarding conference.

We look forward to continued cooperation with the Swedish Committee Against Antisemitism on the crucial fight against anti-Semitism and for greater democracy.

We can learn a great deal from your work, and be inspired by your valuable contribution to knowledge and solutions for a better society and a better world.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech on Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at IHEC in Carthage, Tunis

Published 28 October 2016 Updated 28 October 2016

## Check against delivery

Minister Labidi, Mr. Dimiter Chalev, Ladies and Gentlemen, Students,

Four hundred and seventeen thousand. That is the number of internally displaced people in Libya. Many of them are women and children living under dire humanitarian conditions, without protection against gender-based and sexual violence, which is increasing according to recent reports.

Four percent. The number of signatories of 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011 that were women. In the same sample, only 2 percent of chief mediators and 9 percent negotiators are women.

I am here today to talk to you about why Sweden actively pursues a feminist foreign policy. With these two interlinked examples – Libya, a conflict with serious repercussions not least for Tunisia, and the lack of women involved in peace processes globally – I want to illustrate why it is so important that we include 100 percent of the population when we address war and conflict. But not only then: Tunisia is one of the best examples of how women's active political participation contributes to sustainable social change and democratic gains.

I am honoured to address you at this prestigious research institution and thank IHEC and the UN Office of Human Rights for hosting us.

Thank you, Mr. Chalev, for your introductory comments. I look forward to a

discussion with you, Ms. Labidi. I am happy to see many familiar faces here today of women who have contributed to Tunisia's democratic consolidation, and the faces of many more whom I hope will do so in the future.

I have divided speech into three parts. First, I will describe the concept of a feminist foreign policy in more detail. Secondly, I will highlight some areas where the world can learn from Tunisia. I will conclude with some thoughts on how we can achieve real change.

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What a feminist foreign policy can do

Sweden's feminist foreign policy aims at ensuring women's rights and participation in central decision-making processes. Gender equality is not just the right thing to do. As research is consistently telling us, it is the necessary and smart thing to do if we want to achieve our wider security and foreign policy objectives. We know for a fact that increasing gender equality has a positive impact on food security, extremism, health, education and various other key global concerns.

Feminist foreign policy is an integral part of the activities of the Swedish Foreign Service. Our methodology can be summarised in four words, all beginning with the letter "R."

Reality check is about getting the facts right from the outset. If we look to the needs and aspirations of 100 percent of the population, what is the situation on the ground? How should we then prioritize?

Rights. The fact is that human rights are also women's rights. Here, two fundamental tracks must be followed when pursuing a feminist foreign policy. Firstly, there are areas where we must aim for prohibition, such as gender-based discrimination, domestic violence and forced marriages. Secondly, there are areas where the aim is progress, for example equal rights to inheritance and access to education, employment and health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights. These areas are key to women's empowerment.

Representation, which includes influence over agenda-setting and starts by asking a simple question: who conducts policy? Whether it regards foreign or domestic policy, whether in Sweden or Tunisia, we see that women are still under-represented in influential positions in all areas of society. I am proud

that the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs might be an exception: five top positions – all three ministers and two out of three state secretaries – are held by women.

Resources refers to Sweden's ambitious international work, for example in development cooperation. The starting-point here is the need to apply a gender perspective when distributing aid and resources. To give an example: today, only one per cent of spending in security sector reform is allocated to initiatives which consider gender equality a significant objective. This is unacceptable. Global gender equality goals must have financial backing.

Learning from each other: the Tunisian example

It gives me particular pleasure to talk about gender issues here in Tunisia. Since Tunisia's independence 60 years ago, you have led the way in terms of advancing women's rights. Tunisian policies promoting women's education and participation in the labour market are unique in this part of the world. Women hold prominent positions in politics, social life and business, several of whom I see here today. I also see many bright and dedicated students, young men and women, the future leaders of Tunisia. To you I want to say: intellectual freedom is a cornerstone of democracy, cherish it, protect it. When you graduate, there is a world waiting for new leadership and strong values.

I also want to highlight the role that women played in the revolution five years ago and continue to play in consolidating your democracy. Tunisia's many democratic gains – new political parties, free democratic elections, freedom of speech and a vibrant civil society – are an illustration of how women's participation is crucial for sustainable development. The new Tunisian constitution that was adopted in 2014 guarantees equal human rights and citizenship for men and women and is a testament to the commitment, struggle and endurance of many passionate advocates in politics, civil society and media alike. I applaud you.

How can we work together to achieve real change?

As you may know, Sweden yesterday inaugurated our embassy to Tunisia. I warmly welcome this strengthening of our bilateral ties and look forward to the work that we will do together in the future. Swedish aid to Tunisia includes support for human rights training in the justice sector and capacity building for female judges. Facilitated by the Swedish Institute, cooperation now also addresses the topic of gender equality through children's literature.

Swedish companies employ over 5,000 Tunisians, a majority of them women. And I have learned that Beity, with Swedish support, has inaugurated a Centre d'Accueil for marginalized women here in Tunis. Sweden is proud to be a partner in all these ventures and more to come as we look forward to closer cooperation between our two countries.

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Dear friends,

Gender equality is not a 'women's issue'. It is an issue of human rights, and of development. Our two countries have already pledged to work together towards the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Gender equality is not just one of the 17 goals, but also precondition for the achievement of many of the others.

Sweden will join the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member for 2017-2018. We will prioritize the topic of women, peace and security in our work, pushing to operationalise the ground-breaking Security Council Resolution 1325 with regard to all phases including peacebuilding and conflict prevention. We will work to overcome the glaring underrepresentation of female mediators in UN peace processes.

Sweden's feminist foreign policy aims to respond to one of the greatest challenges of this century: the continued violations of women's and girls' human. Regardless of whether we struggle for gender equality at home - in Sweden or Tunisia, or in a context of conflict like neighbouring Libya – let's remember how the Swedish feminist and author Elin Wägner compared values and ideals to old-fashioned bicycle lights: they don't light up until you pedal forwards.

In our work for global gender equality, Sweden and Tunisia can do a great deal together. I am confident that many of you in this room will join in pedalling forward.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs ahead of United Nations Day

Published 27 October 2016 Updated 27 October 2016

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Stockholm Concert Hall, 21 October 2016. Check against delivery.

Friends of the UN,

I would like to begin by thanking the United Nations Association of Sweden for inviting me here to this celebration of United Nations Day.

As Minister for Foreign Affairs, and as a human being, I am proud of the great commitment to the UN that exists in Sweden – and of the work that Sweden has done in the UN ever since we became a member 70 years ago.

You know as well as I do: the UN is the world's most important platform for international peace and security. The UN is a matter for all of us.

We need an effective UN with popular support that is in tune with the times.

That was true yesterday. It is true today. And it will be true tomorrow.

And in times like ours, I think you will agree that the UN is needed more than ever – along with belief in the UN and commitment to the UN.

I would therefore like to thank you for continuing to spread knowledge of the UN in Swedish society.

Over the next twenty minutes I will speak about three areas.



Firstly: what is the situation in the world, and does the UN still play a role in the changes we want to see?

Secondly: what is Sweden's responsibility, and what can a small country like Sweden do?

And the third and most important question is also the theme of this year's seminar: what is Sweden's role on the UN Security Council?

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Friends,

We live in troubled times. One terrible act of terrorism is followed by another. Millions of people are fleeing wars and disasters.

We hear reports every day of terrible human suffering – from war-torn Syria to hurricane-struck Haiti.

The threat from authoritarian leaders, the questioning of democracy, growing isolationism.

And this is despite the fact that our greatest need is for more cooperation, more multilateralism.

How can we manage to tackle the challenges of our time?

I am convinced that the UN can and must be part of the answer. And there are many good examples of the UN functioning as the forum for peace that we want to see.

Because 2015 was a year filled with major UN agreements.

I'm thinking of the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai.

I'm thinking of the International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa.

I'm thinking of COP21 in Paris.

And, of course, I'm thinking of last year's agreement on the new Global Goals for Sustainable Development and the 2030 Agenda.

Through the 2030 Agenda, the countries of the world have committed to

ending poverty and hunger everywhere; to combating inequalities within and among countries; to building peaceful and inclusive societies; to protecting human rights and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and to ensuring the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources.

This agreement and this commitment are a triumph for the UN system as a concept and as a platform for decision-making.

But now we have to translate these into practice, and this depends not only on the UN as an institution, but also equally on the Member States.

If we are to live up to the new Global Goals, we need a strong and effective UN.

Naturally, Sweden will continue to work for this.

And I am grateful that you – Sweden's civil society – are helping us to help the UN.

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Friends,

Commitment to the UN is part of the Swedish national identity.

More than 80 000 Swedes have served in UN peacekeeping operations, and Sweden has taken part in most UN operations since 1948.

Dag Hammarskjöld, Alva Myrdal, Jan Eliasson, Hans Blix, Folke Bernadotte, Staffan de Mistura – who will be joining us here today – have all worked for peace in the service of the UN.

And it is perhaps significant that when the World Federation of United Nations Associations was formed in 1946, its first President was a Swedish parliamentarian, [and woman,] Kerstin Hesselgren.

And it feels similarly natural that the current President, Bonian Golmohammadi, is also Swedish.

Sweden's work in the UN is characterised by its breadth, depth and commitment – in everything from UN development policy efforts to the law of the sea and preserving marine biodiversity.

Allow me to cite a few current UN issues to illustrate this breadth.

Since 2014, Sweden has contributed an intelligence unit comprising around 250 personnel to the UN operations in Mali.

This has given us an insight into the major challenges the UN is facing, not least the threat to civilian populations and operations personnel.

Sweden continues to work for zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuses in UN contexts.

The UN also serves as the hub of the humanitarian system. Today, there are 125 million people in need of humanitarian assistance.

This year, the first global humanitarian summit was held. We can be proud that Sweden is one of the very largest humanitarian donors, even in absolute terms.

I would like to touch briefly on the issue of migration. The UN summit on migration held on 19 September was an important step towards finding innovative and sustainable solutions for the world's 65 million refugees and internally displaced people.

And to create the conditions for secure, orderly and regulated migration for the world's 244 million migrants.

The summit marked the beginning of a process, and the follow-up will be crucial. Naturally, Sweden will take part in this work.

Disarmament has been on the UN's agenda ever since the organisation was formed.

In times of increasing armament, voices for disarmament must continue to be heard.

In a worsened security policy climate, status quo in the area of disarmament implies greater risks for all.

Within weeks, the First Committee of the General Assembly will decide on the resolution to begin negotiations on a global ban on nuclear weapons.

Nuclear weapons are the only weapons of mass destruction that are still not banned outright.

And I am very proud to announce that the Government this week decided to back this resolution.

It is a crucial step towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

For a week now, we have also known who will be the next Secretary-General of the United Nations – António Guterres of Portugal.

The world needs a courageous and strong Secretary-General with vision and drive, who will work for peace, gender equality, human rights and sustainable development in line with the UN Charter.

I look forward to working with Mr Guterres – not least during Sweden's presidency of the UN Security Council, which begins as Mr Guterres takes office in January 2017.

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Friends,

On 28 June this year, Sweden was elected by a comfortable margin as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

I am honoured by, and proud of, the confidence that the countries of the world have shown in us. Our seat on the Security Council is a testament to the Government's global policy for sustainable peace and development.

The UN Charter gives the UN Security Council ultimate responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

The Security Council must therefore be the guarantor of key principles and rules in the multilateral system. In turn, this system is the foundation of our security policy and of most of our cooperation with other states.

So how can Sweden's seat on the Security Council contribute to a more peaceful world? And what are Sweden's priorities ahead of our membership of the Security Council?

The Security Council agenda is dominated by country-specific issues. Sweden must be a professional and principled member that takes responsibility for the entire Security Council agenda.

We must also be prepared for the unexpected. The Security Council agenda

is partly steered by events, and the Council's focus can be adjusted heavily based on major events in the world.

Imagine, for example, what happened to the agenda when the Arab Spring broke out.

Sweden's actions in the Security Council will be informed by values and principles: international law, human rights, gender equality and a humanitarian perspective.

Standing up for international law in the Security Council is both a means to ensure that policy is formulated within the framework of the UN Charter and international law, and an end in itself.

We will bring our foreign policy priorities to the Security Council: the importance of preventing conflict and relapse into conflict, the inclusion of women in peace processes, and the connection between security and development.

Sweden will work on these issues – particularly within the points already on the Security Council agenda – to ensure the greatest possible impact 'on the ground'.

All of our work on the Security Council will be informed by a gender equality perspective.

Equality between women and men is a goal in itself, but it is also a prerequisite if we are to achieve international peace and security.

Last year, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva published a study showing that peace processes in which women were included also lead to more peace treaties and more sustainable peace.

Therefore, more women must participate as mediators in peace processes, and take part in peacekeeping missions.

The international community must move from words to deeds in implementing commitments for women, peace and security.

We want the strong wording with respect to women, peace and security in the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMA) to spread to other UN resolutions.

We want recognition for the peacebuilding efforts of Colombia's women. We want Mali to be urged to do more to include women in its peace process.

And for Somalia to actually live up to its commitment to a quota of 30 per cent women in the next parliament in the election that is still being delayed.

In recent weeks, the situation in Syria has deteriorated even further. It is unacceptable to bomb civilian populations, attacks hospitals and target humanitarian convoys.

This cannot be allowed to continue, and it is appalling that the Security Council has failed – mainly due to the Russian veto – to achieve consensus on this issue.

Our membership of the Security Council offers us an opportunity in yet another arena to contribute to creating the conditions for a peace process in Syria. We are already supporting the process by ensuring that civil society and women are present at the talks being held.

We will work for increased prospects of humanitarian assistance getting through, and improved compliance with humanitarian law.

Our membership also offers an opportunity to improve the UN's capabilities to prevent conflicts turning into armed conflicts.

The Security Council must become better at reacting to signs of impending conflict. This requires a thorough understanding of the root causes of conflicts – including social, economic and political factors.

But it also means using Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter on the pacific settlement of disputes.

When Sweden takes its seat on the Security Council, we will therefore push for a fresh approach and a redoubling of efforts to prevent armed conflict.

Improved reporting to the Security Council from the UN field offices could improve the Council's risk assessments.

And enhanced cooperation with regional organisations such as the African Union and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the Security Council can more effectively become closer to countries that risk becoming stages for war and conflict.

The new Secretary-General must also have sufficient courage and sufficient political scope to act. And the Security Council must have the courage to give the Secretary-General that scope.

Preventing armed conflict is a matter of both increased capabilities and a stronger will.

As a member of the Security Council, we will stand up for this – and for a strong Secretary-General.

This is our aim – and I have already contacted António Guterres to this effect.

In summary, let me say that Sweden's role will be to help ensure that Security Council decisions, which are binding on all 193 UN Member States, are as good and as effective as possible.

Because it is important to remember that Sweden is on the Council at the mandate of and on behalf of the General Assembly. We have been entrusted with a responsibility.

And we will discharge our duty with pride and with principle, in dialogue with the other fourteen members of the Security Council, with the countries on the Council's agenda, and with countries that contribute troops to UN operations.

We will not only talk about countries, we will talk with countries.

We will bring our Swedish perspective to the UN's inner sanctum. We know who we are, what we stand for and what we want.

At the same time, we must be realistic.

We also know that the world, and the other fourteen members of the Council, five of whom have a veto, do not always share our views.

This is a reality in relation to which we will have to position ourselves, using the tools of diplomacy and dialogue.

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Friends,

Transparency and dialogue will be the hallmarks of Sweden's membership of the Security Council. We will work for more efficient working methods in the Council. And we will continue to contribute to strengthening cooperation between the UN and the EU.

This transparent approach will also be the hallmark of our work at home in Sweden.

The Riksdag's Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs will be kept informed.

Civil society will regularly be invited to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for dialogue – the first meeting took place in September.

And I have myself established a reference council for our Security Council membership. It consists of fifteen members, participating in a personal capacity, from academia, government agencies and civil society.

The reference council last met on Wednesday, and the United Nations Association's own President, Aleksander Gabelic, is among the members.

I know that this council will have important perspectives to contribute.

Friends of the UN,

My time is almost up, and I would therefore like to conclude with what are actually the crucial questions.

Why is the UN really needed? And why do we celebrate United Nations Day?

By way of an answer, I would like to refer to the United Nations Charter.

The UN is needed to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

And the UN is needed for its work on fundamental human rights, and for the dignity and worth of every human being, and for equal rights for men and women.

So simple – and yet so difficult.

I think you will agree that it is particularly important to celebrate United Nations Day this year, when the world and the UN are facing so many



challenges.

I think that by gathering here today, we are showing that we believe in the UN as an concept. But also that we are showing that we want a reinvigorated and strong UN with the conditions to work in the service of peace – in practice.

But this also requires us to see the bigger picture, and to understand that issues such as peace, development, climate, security and human rights are all interdependent.

Sweden will be a caring critic of the UN. A friend who always wishes well, but is not afraid to speak out when mistakes are made.

And I think that we celebrate United Nations Day to remind ourselves and the world that our joint efforts for the UN have taken us some way down the path

– but also to remind us that we are not even close to our destination.

When UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited Stockholm earlier this year, he said that "Sweden is a superpower of solidarity, dialogue and cooperation".

I am proud to represent such a country.

Together with you, I look forward to continuing to work for an effective UN with popular support that is in tune with the times – and for a Sweden that continues to stand up for the UN's principles for the next seventy years.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Hertie School of Governance, Berlin

Published 07 October 2016 Updated 07 October 2016

## The EU in a rapidly changing world: where do we go from here? Check against delivery

Professor Doctor Anheier,

Friends,

We meet at a time marked by the destruction of war and by the desperation of refugees.

A gardener in Aleppo asks for peace, but is silenced by bombs.

A Yazidi woman wants to study, but Daesh makes her a sex slave.

A family dreams about Canada, but a little boy is washed up on a Turkish beach.

We meet at a time marked by the return of geopolitical rivalries and aggressive nationalism.

The very foundations of how we live together are being challenged: Russia tries to move borders through aggression and challenges the European security order; another nuclear test is conducted by North Korea.

Our political landscape is revisited by the spectres of xenophobia, autocrats, demagogues, fear-mongering and flat-out lies.

But to paraphrase a man who might soon become the First Gentleman of the

United States:

There is nothing wrong in our world that cannot be cured with what is right in our world.

And dear future European leaders:

There is nothing wrong with Europe that cannot be cured with what is right in Europe.

We are right whenever elections are fair, voices are free, and courts are faultless.

We are right when openness, diversity and trade create decent jobs and equality.

We are right when we unite around seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.

We are right when we agree in Paris to save our planet.

We are right whenever peace and diplomacy trump violence.

And we are right to believe that when we work together – the very basis of our European project – there are better days ahead.

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In times of challenges and opportunities, it is always a pleasure to visit friends.

I am pleased to be here in Berlin – one of Europe's most vibrant cities – in the context of the Swedish State Visit.

Germany is not only Sweden's largest trading partner, but also a very important political ally.

And since we are in Berlin, it is pertinent to recall the late Willy Brandt.

We all know that Willy Brandt had to spend parts of his life in Norway and Sweden.

And as I turn to address today's topic – The EU in a rapidly changing world – some of the lessons that Willy Brandt's life taught us are more relevant than

ever:

Our destinies are common.

When in need we help each other.

Europe is stronger when we are united.

And our world is stronger if we bridge the gap between our peoples.

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Let me describe three major challenges that have shaken Europe in the past decade.

And let me then conclude with what I see as five key reforms and initiatives.

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First of all: the financial crisis and the economic turmoil of recent years have had a profound impact on our societies.

They have increased inequalities and gaps between different groups within our Union, and strained the social fabric of Europe.

They have also damaged public trust and confidence in the EU and its institutions.

In some countries hit by austerity measures, there is a feeling of having been treated unfairly.

In other countries, there is discontent and a perceived obligation to pay for other people's problems.

However, we must remember that our economies are intertwined through the Single Market.

The crisis put the EU's problem-solving capacity to the test, and in the end we managed to find common solutions.

But the aftermath of the financial crisis has also had a major impact on the European labour market.

If you are in doubt, talk to the young people in Europe.

Unemployment levels are still too high in many Member States, and this risks sparking social tension.

This is a clear sign that we must continue our reforms, investments and structural measures.

Current actions at EU level appear to be having an effect, and youth unemployment levels are actually falling in most Member States right now.

This trend needs to be strengthened further.

A bright future for the EU is linked to its bright young people and their prospects of being offered decent jobs and opportunities to shape their own lives.

\* \* \*

Secondly, the refugee crisis, the largest movement of people since the Second World War.

People are fleeing from war and oppression, with the hope of finding protection and a decent life – for example in Europe.

We have a joint responsibility to take care of those in need and to protect their right to asylum.

It is a moral obligation; it is the right thing to do.

And, may I add, history has shown that migration normally turns out to be an opportunity for the country that receives ambitious and hard-working citizens.

However, the refugee crisis has also created new tensions in the EU.

Sweden, together with Germany, has welcomed a significant number of refugees.

But for the European asylum system to be sustainable in the long-term, all Member States must shoulder their share of responsibility.

\* \* \*

The third European challenge that I would like to address is Brexit.

The Brexit debate is, just like the refugee crisis, affecting the internal dynamics of our Union.

I deeply regret the result of the referendum – it is certainly not what Sweden and Europe had hoped for.

Nonetheless, it is important to respect the will of the British people.

And now it is important that the EU 27 stand united and strive to work in a spirit of solidarity, unity and trust.

We also hope for close UK-EU cooperation in the future, not least on foreign and security policy.

\* \* \*

The British referendum also puts a spotlight on the important question of popular support for the EU, and it reveals a significant paradox.

On the one hand, EU citizens find it hard to love the EU, voters question its democratic legitimacy and tend to take for granted the many advantages that European integration has brought us.

On the other hand, when I travel to different parts of the world, I notice with pride that the EU is viewed as a shining model of regional cooperation and integration, with a strong power of attraction.

The EU and its Member States account for nearly one third of world trade, and are collectively the world's largest aid donor.

Personally, I believe that the EU, just as so many times before, will come back stronger after yet another harsh wake-up call.

And I am confident that in the long run, more countries – to our East and on the Western Balkans and beyond – will join our chosen European path.

Because it is a path where bloodshed on the battlefield is replaced with patience at the negotiating table.

European history has taught us that this is the path we have to follow.

And remember that it should always be up to the people themselves, for example in the Eastern Partnership countries, to decide whether they would

like to join us on our path.

\* \* \*

So even in the face of challenges, I remain a long-term European optimist.

So before we start our discussion, let me highlight a few areas in which we need concerted action and common solutions.

\* \* \*

1. First of all, we need to discuss how to build security in the 21st century.

Security is by definition something we must build together. Security is something we share.

That leads us to emphasise de-escalation and disarmament, mediation and dialogue, conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

This is a cornerstone of Swedish security policy.

However, in recent years, the security situation in our immediate neighbourhood has, unfortunately, deteriorated rapidly.

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its aggression against Ukraine has cost nearly ten thousand lives and continues as we speak.

And the situation on the EU's southern border, the attempted coup in Turkey and the ongoing war in Syria, also require joint action.

That is why the EU's dialogue with Russia must be clear and principled, and our support to Ukraine strong.

The EU's support to the countries of the Eastern Partnership is key to their development into resilient and democratic societies.

So in order to build 'common security' and successfully meet today's multiple challenges, we need to strengthen the European tools at our disposal.

A natural starting point for such a discussion is how we use the European External Action Service.

European foreign ministers, myself included, have homework to do.

But to start with, we very much welcome the EU Global Strategy.

The EUGS has a strong commitment to values and a rules-based global order, as well as a broad-based approach using all the instruments available in external policies.

It is a central platform for the EU to respond proactively and take global responsibility.

We need to strengthen civilian crisis management operations.

We need to use all our tools.

Our military and civilian instruments, whether within the competence of the Member States or the Commission, need to work together more effectively.

We also need to be able to respond to crises more rapidly.

The concept of EU Battle Groups needs to be further developed so that they can become the rapid and flexible response force that they were designed to be.

Using rapid, flexible and adequate civilian and military resources where and when they needed to support long-term stabilisation in the full conflict cycle should be the norm.

We will actively work for the EU to move in that direction.

Sweden has a long track record and will continue to be actively engaged in crisis management, the prevention of radicalisation, respect for human rights, and women's role in peace and development.

We believe that a comprehensive and long-term approach is crucial.

Political instability, climate change, conflicts and violence affect us all in one way or another, directly or indirectly, and it is in our interest to tackle these challenges at their root, in a coherent and integrated manner.

As HRVP Mogherini puts it in her foreword to the EUGS:

"In challenging times, a strong Union is one that thinks strategically, shares a vision and acts together."



\* \* \*

My second point is about migration policy, which also is a very important aspect of the EU's external relations.

The EU must continue to promote peace, security and development, while upholding human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Also, since migration issues are truly global, the EU must show strong leadership in following up the UN Summit on Refugees and Migrants held in September.

And in the EU we need an efficient, common asylum system, based on human rights and international law, where the reception of asylum seekers is shared collectively.

And we need to offer safe and legal routes to Europe and make dangerous Mediterranean crossings unnecessary.

A number of key decisions have already been made and these must now be implemented by all.

In the short term, we are looking at functioning hotspots for the registration of asylum seekers, full implementation of the agreement between the EU and Turkey, and enhanced cooperation with third countries of both origin and transit.

The distribution of asylum seekers in the EU, however, is very uneven.

We must find a common system where Member States share the responsibility to receive people with protection needs.

It is a matter of credibility for the EU.

\* \* \*

Thirdly, we need a renewed focus on how the EU can better deliver on the expectations of its citizens.

The support and trust of Europe's citizens are essential to build what we appropriately call a 'People's Europe'.

Politicians have an important task here in terms of dialogue and

communication.

We need to explain and seek support for EU policies in their early stages.

But we also need to stand up for joint EU decisions in their implementation phase.

The 'People's Europe' is also about defending our democracy.

Standing up to threats, hatred, xenophobia, sexism and violence against minorities.

Never accepting demonisation of religious or ethnic groups.

Defending free and independent media and every person's right to meet and move freely in society.

These democratic values are the foundation of our Union.

\* \* \*

My fourth point is about what we often call a social Europe.

We need an EU that works harder for the well-being of its people.

In a social Europe, growth and social progress go hand in hand.

Workers in the EU should not be forced to compete against each other on the basis of lower wages or poorer working conditions.

A social Europe strengthens people through more secure jobs and better living conditions.

As part of this work, we must also develop a strategic approach to promote gender equality and women's participation in the labour market.

If women's and men's labour force participation rates in the EU were the same, GDP could increase by 12 per cent by 2030.

Striving for a truly equal world of work is not only ethically right, it is also economically smart.

Here, education and life-long learning are key.

By investing in people and equipping them with the right skills, we can help them to adapt to changing conditions.

In the second half of 2017, Prime Minister Löfven will host a social summit in Sweden, which will be an important milestone to drive these issues forward.

\* \* \*

My fifth point is about a green Europe, with an ambitious climate, energy and environmental policy.

I naturally welcome the Council conclusions last week calling for rapid ratification of the Paris Agreement by European countries.

But a strong energy union is also needed to ensure reduced carbon dioxide emissions and increased renewable energy and energy efficiency.

This is important not only for an efficient energy market and security of supply, but also for competitiveness, sustainable growth and more jobs in Europe.

\* \* \*

Friends,

I said at the outset, we meet at a time marked by the destruction of war and by the desperation of refugees.

And there is no other way to end a speech in October 2016 than to return to the war in Syria.

Let me be clear: it is totally and utterly unacceptable to bomb civilians, children and hospitals.

Assad and Russia are moving further away from peace and humanity.

In light of the horrific situation in Aleppo and the breakdown of American attempts to have Russia recommit to the cessation of hostilities, the EU HRVP Mogherini and Commissioner Stylianides launched a humanitarian initiative last Saturday.

The initiative addresses the growing needs of civilians trapped by the

conflict.

But it also aims to facilitate the urgent delivery of basic life-saving assistance to civilians.

The objective is also to ensure the medical evacuation of the sick and wounded from Eastern Aleppo who are in urgent need of medical care.

The focus is on women, children and the elderly.

The EU remains a top donor to the humanitarian response to the Syria crisis, both inside Syria and in neighboring countries.

We also actively support the attempts to reach a political solution; both through Staffan de Mistura's UN mediation role, and by helping the opposition to remain united and committed to a negotiated solution.

\* \* \*

Like all of you, I see the images coming from Syria with a broken and angry heart.

Let me assure you that both Sweden and the EU will continue to do what we can to put an end to the slaughter.

Because as Willy Brandt said:

"Peace is not everything, but without peace, everything is nothing."

Thank you. And now I am looking forward to hearing your questions.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at UNRWA side event “Protracted refugee situations – what more can be done?”

Published 19 September 2016 Updated 19 September 2016

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at UNRWA side event “Protracted refugee situations – what more can be done?” **CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The need for solidarity with the world's refugees and with nations that receive them is more evident than ever. More countries have to take a greater share. These are global issues that require joint global efforts.

I would like to make 6 main points:

We must address the root causes of conflict and strife, invest more in conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction, and do more to stop the ongoing conflicts that are behind our record-high humanitarian needs. I recall in this regard that all states have the responsibility to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights for all. Respect for human rights and international humanitarian law are key factors for peace and stability.

When discussing this situation, we cannot ignore the over 5 million Palestinians who have been refugees for two thirds of a century. Nor can we ignore UNRWA's crucial contribution to supporting these refugees and the

positive effects of its work for stability in the region. For this I want to thank UNRWA. Sweden is one of the largest donors to UNRWA. The Government has just proposed to Parliament an additional contribution of just over USD 8 million for 2016.

Sweden is one of the world's largest humanitarian donors, facilitates resettlement of people in need of protection, and supports efforts to integrate refugees in host societies – both in partner countries and at home. Sweden has a strong and long-standing commitment to resettlement, and our resettlement quota is one of the highest in Europe. Sweden has also been active within the EU to encourage more Member States to contribute to resettlement. Sweden will continue to make participation in resettlement activities a high priority also on the international agenda. Sweden promotes refugees' access to education and employment in host countries, as we ourselves make these sectors accessible to refugees and migrants in Sweden.

Since displacement puts women's and girls' health and safety at risk, we also provide valuable insights from our unique feminist foreign policy. We are honoured to be leading the initiative 'Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies' this year, with the aim of building a global coalition to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in emergencies. We urge all actors in humanitarian emergencies to integrate a gender perspective in their work and combat gender-based violence.

Development actors must engage earlier and more robustly in humanitarian contexts and fragile states. Humanitarian and development actors must increasingly share a situational understanding, agree on common mid- to long-term goals, and work towards those common goals, according to their separate mandates. The neutral and unpolitical nature of humanitarian action must be safeguarded.

Sweden has adopted a regional development cooperation strategy (USD 200 million) to strengthen the resilience of the Syrian population, refugees, and vulnerable groups in Syria's neighbouring countries. The strategy implements a lot of the thinking behind a closer humanitarian-development nexus.

More than 80 percent of the world's refugees are hosted in developing countries and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the refugee hosting countries.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Women, Peace and Security Conference

Published 09 September 2016 Updated 09 September 2016

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Women, Peace and Security Conference, 7 September, Rabat, Morocco. Check against delivery.

Minister Bouaida, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

It is my great pleasure to be here today.

Thank you, Minister Bouaida, for hosting me and for inviting both qualified fellow speakers and an inspiring audience.

The theme of today's conference is: Women, Peace, Security and Development.

How very important this is.

All we need to do is to take a look at the world to understand why we must speak about this topic.

Your destiny is also our destiny. This is perhaps more evident now than ever before.

Today, the challenges that each of our countries faces are often common challenges.

We can address them better if we work together and learn from each other.

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I would like to begin by addressing three areas I believe are important to discuss when we talk about women, peace, security and development.

Firstly, we must talk about the fact that today, more than 60 million people are seeking refuge from war, persecution or other forms of violence.

Sixty million is the highest number since the Second World War – roughly the equivalent of the entire population of Italy on the run.

And if all those people who are now in need of humanitarian assistance made up one country, it would be the 11th largest country in the world.

The world's refugee population today is increasingly made up of women and young people. According to a recent UNICEF report, half of those seeking refuge today are children. Refugees are increasingly vulnerable, many living in urban areas, not in camps, hard to reach, and at serious risk of violation and exploitation.

How can we work together to better protect women, girls and boys who are forced to flee their homes? And how can we act more boldly to prevent conflicts, end conflicts and build sustainable peace?

Secondly, we must recognise that sexual and gender-based violence in conflict is a security challenge and a threat to development.

When I travelled in my capacity as the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflicts, I often came across three myths that we have to correct, namely that sexual violence in conflicts is inevitable, unspeakable or a lesser crime.

This is a dangerous narrative.

We must therefore speak up and call it what it is: a crime, a tactic of terror and a weapon of war. And we must fight it.

Thirdly, I am convinced of the need for a solid knowledge base, including statistics, as a starting point for informed decisions on policy and reforms.

I therefore believe that gender-disaggregated data and statistics are important.

This was – and still is – important in the case of Sweden.



And it is important in other countries.

I understand that Morocco has introduced gender-responsive budgeting. This sets an example for others.

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Gender equality is not a 'women's issue'. It is a core issue for international peace and security. Women and men both stand to gain from greater gender equality.

Indisputable evidence shows that women's participation leads to more sustainable peace.

When my Government assumed office two years ago, we declared that Sweden's Government is a feminist Government.

And I declared that Sweden would pursue a feminist foreign policy.

Why?

Because gender equality and women's participation in society are also peace and security issues.

I like to speak of three Rs: rights, representation and resources. Do women enjoy the same rights as men? Are they represented in society? And do they have the same resources as men?

As I said, evidence shows that women's participation leads to more sustainable peace.

And yet today, we are all too familiar with women being significantly underrepresented in, and excluded from, peace and mediation processes.

Out of 1168 peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2013, only 18 per cent made any reference to women and gender.

From 1992 to 2011, fewer than four per cent of signatories to peace agreements, and only nine per cent of peace negotiators, were women.

Sustainable development, peace and security can never be achieved if half the population is excluded.

I appreciate the important work that Morocco has done, in cooperation with Spain, to make women's role in mediation part of your joint initiative on the promotion of mediation in the Mediterranean. Your training of women in the field of mediation is impressive and sets an example.

As part of my Government's broader feminist foreign policy, we have initiated a Swedish network of women peace mediators. And we are also taking part in the development of a Nordic women's mediator network.

We aim to create networks with international women mediation teams from across the globe.

We hope to be able to cooperate with the Moroccan-Spanish Mediterranean initiative.

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I would like to conclude with a reminder to us all: human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights.

This is not only a value to carry in your heart.

Research shows that when women are involved in peace processes, the peace that follows is more sustainable.

So let us take note and carry gender equality in our heads too.

And finally, we should also recall that, according to UNESCO, the oldest continuously operating university in the world is to be found in the Moroccan city of Fez.

Most naturally, it was founded by a woman.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the India Trilateral Forum

Published 09 September 2016 Updated 09 September 2016

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the India Trilateral Forum, Stockholm, 8 September 2016. Check against delivery.

Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to Sweden and to the eleventh India Trilateral Forum.

It's a great pleasure to meet all of you.

I am very happy to see such a prominent gathering of India experts and opinion-makers here in Stockholm.

A warm thank you to our friends at the German Marshall Fund for organising this event.

The Ministry Foreign Affairs has supported the India Trilateral Forum since 2010.

The aim is to bring together experts from Europe, the United States and India for an open and candid dialogue that contributes to widening and deepening cooperation between India, the United States and Europe.

These are very interesting times in our parts of the world, and the agenda reflects that.

I am sure that you will have productive and inspiring discussions.

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Ladies and gentlemen,

As you know, the economic and political rise of India is a fact.

The growing role of India on the global scene is an opportunity for all of us.

India shares a community of values with Sweden, the EU and the US, being committed to democratic institutions, the rule of law and human rights.

A victim of terrorism, India is in the front line globally in the fight against it.

India has a huge and talented diaspora, forming important bonds with other countries.

This is true also here in Sweden, where Indian IT professionals greatly contribute to the successful IT-hub of Stockholm.

India has a young and dynamic population. And Indian culture is celebrated across the world.

So when I think of India rising, I think of hope and great expectations.

When I look ahead at global challenges – be they reducing conflicts and making peace more sustainable, or tackling climate change and ensuring sustainable development, India is, and will continue to be, indispensable.

As India grows on the world stage, I am confident that it will shoulder increased responsibility.

This responsibility will include upholding global norms, protecting global commons and an international order based on international law and human rights, meaning of course also women's rights, and with the UN at its core.

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Friends,

On 28 June, Sweden was elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2017 and 2018.

The public and very valuable support of India (in the Joint Statement of our two Prime Ministers) was very important to us.

And I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation.

In January we start our term as President of the Council.

We will be prepared to deal with both the Council's ongoing agenda and unforeseen crises.

But in one sense, there will be no surprises.

We will stay true to our principles.

Sweden's foreign policy rests firmly on international law, respect for human rights and gender equality.

Our Security Council membership will do the same.

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Friends,

The world knows India as a strong advocate of global collaboration within the framework of the United Nations.

It has been a leading country in many UN contexts, such as the G77.

India's commitment and efforts to promote export control are commendable.

Sweden remains a supporter of India's membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group and will work with partners to move this process forward.

I warmly congratulate and welcome India's joining the Missile Technology Control Regime.

It is my firm belief that India's active participation will strengthen global export control efforts.

India's further engagement in international non-proliferation efforts would be demonstrated by, for example, signing the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty.

Importantly for us, India and Sweden share a steadfast confidence in multilateralism.

I say this because, with the increasing uncertainty in the world, effective multilateralism – with the UN at its core – is perhaps more important than ever before.

A rising India can give new impetus to the belief that nations of the world can meet collective challenges only by working together.

To be effective, the UN system needs reform.

This includes the Security Council.

For the Council to be more legitimate and effective, a more adequate representation from Africa, Asia and Latin America is required.

This is why Sweden supports India as a permanent member of a reformed and enlarged Security Council.

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Sweden is proud to enjoy a growing strategic partnership with the world's largest democracy.

Working with India to expand our relations is an explicit priority of this Government.

Historically, our relations have been strong. We are very pleased that they are now being further widened and deepened in partnership.

We are two democratic countries with some obvious differences – size being one – but we have many key features and interests in common.

This past year or so, we have witnessed a build-up of a new and historic momentum in India–Sweden relations.

In June 2015, we had the pleasure of welcoming President Mukherjee to Sweden – the first-ever visit to our country by an Indian President.

And in February this year, our Prime Minister led one of the largest Swedish trade delegations ever to the 'Make in India' exhibition and conference in Mumbai.

He met with Prime Minister Modi, and they issued a Joint Statement which gives us ambitious, broad and forward-looking directions for our cooperation.

We work together on issues ranging from energy to the environment and health, from digitalisation to defence and security.

We have signed recent MoUs on smart cities, on railways and more.

Trade and investment between our countries is increasing, with about 160 Swedish companies now present in India, and growing Indian investment in Sweden.

And we enjoy a close dialogue on bilateral and global issues in several ways: through our Joint Commission, through Foreign Office Consultations, and, not least, thanks to our re-launched National Security Advisor Level Dialogue.

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Where do we go from here?

Sweden cannot match India in size and numbers.

But following the path our Prime Ministers have set out for us, I believe we can build a unique partnership.

Our partnership should be based on common values and an open dialogue, working together on innovation and smart solutions for the betterment of both our societies.

But also working together on global challenges to ensure the future security and prosperity of our two countries, and of others.

I look forward to working with our Indian friends towards these goals.

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Friends,

I wish to say a few words to you Ambassador Harrison.

Your term here in Sweden is about to end.

I would like to offer you my most heartfelt thanks for your extraordinary efforts in promoting relations between our countries.

You are a true friend of Sweden.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you and, once again, a very warm welcome to Stockholm!





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech at Stockholm World Water Week

Published 29 August 2016 Updated 29 August 2016

Foreign Minister Margot Wallström's speech at the opening of World Water Week in Stockholm. (Check against delivery)

Excellencies, Ministers, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today, taking part in World Water Week and having been given the opportunity to speak about the role of water in sustainable growth and to give you an overview of how Sweden is working with the 2030 Agenda. First, I would like to thank the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) for having organised this important event for the past 26 years.

Let me begin with a quote that describes our responsibility for water. It is one of my favourite quotes, which I often used at the European Commission in my previous capacity as European Commissioner for the Environment.

"The same water that we can drink from a mountain stream in a northern country was once in Cleopatra's bath, in Abraham's wells and in a nuclear power plant's cooling system." It is the same water because this is how nature's fantastic ecocycle is constructed. The process of course takes time, but it is still the same water. This is how our ecosystem works and it shows the great responsibility that we have to take care of and manage water resources, and ensure the high quality of water in the south as well as the north.

The theme 'Water and Sustainable Growth' is very relevant and has clear links to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sustainable growth requires

sustainable development, stability, peace, a healthy environment, gender equality and economic growth, etc.

Our world is characterised by conflict, climate change, extremism and inequality. Humanitarian needs seem infinite and we are witnessing the largest number of refugees since the Second World War. At the same time, the World Economic Forum (WEF) in its Global Risks Report has identified water as one of the main challenges worldwide. The water crisis and climate change are closely interlinked: the impact of global climate change is clearly visible in water resources and poses a serious risk to poverty reduction, threatening to undo decades of development efforts.

Millions of people are living in regions with water scarcity, and at the same time a warming planet is increasing the stress on these regions. The world's population continues to grow, which also means increasing demand for water to produce food and for other purposes, such as household needs, sanitation, industrial and energy production, etc.

Armed conflict is often the reason for a lack of access to clean drinking water and sanitation. Peace and stable development are generally requirements for attaining clean water and sanitation.

Climate change also constitutes a threat to global security, as it can be a catalyst for increased tension that can lead to conflicts and poverty, for example, increasing competition for scarce water resources.

However, shared waters and joint management of transboundary water resources can also be an important unifying factor, contributing to dialogue, peace, regional and political stability, and economic growth.

We also know that climate change and a lack of basic resources have a disproportionate effect on the most vulnerable and poor people of the world. They adversely affect security in fragile settings where governance is weak and institutional capacity to deal with shocks and crises is low. We have seen this in Syria, Mali, Sudan, Somalia and in many other places.

Some of the most obvious effects of climate change have direct links to water. Droughts, wild fires, storms, floods, ocean acidification and sea level rise all have devastating effects on life and economic development. Sea level rise can lead to salt polluting fisheries, agriculture and not least the fresh water supply. It is important to remember that oceans and coasts partially support about 75 per cent of the global population residing in the wider

coastal margins.

Access to water, sanitation and hygiene have a direct impact on the health of women and girls. For example, a lack of adequate sanitation and menstrual hygiene facilities at schools and workplaces often leads to absenteeism or pupils dropping out. In many parts of the world, access to a toilet is a matter of security for women and girls.

Access to water significantly reduces women's and girls' workload and the amount of time they spend on arduous tasks such as fetching water. It can free up time for market-based activities and enable them to attend school. But women and girls in the world still experience gender inequality, and a lack of rights, representation and resources. In many families, girls under the age of 15 are twice as likely as boys to be the family member responsible for fetching water.

Women's economic empowerment is not only a prerequisite for the realisation of gender equality; it is also a prerequisite for economic growth, for reducing the number of people living in poverty and for more peaceful and prosperous societies.

There are some similarities between water and the economy. Water starts its existence as rainfall, later creates streams and rivers, forms lakes and finally runs into the oceans. The economy works in a similar way. The flow of activities of individuals, both men and women, enables the economy to grow.

Successful realisation of Goal 6 of the 2030 Agenda will underpin progress across many of the other goals, particularly on nutrition, child health, education, gender equality, healthy cities and healthy water ecosystems and oceans.

Last year, 2015, was an important year for global governance. With worldwide agreements on poverty reduction, disaster risk reduction, development financing and climate change, we now have the comprehensive normative frameworks needed to support sustainable development and peace.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda is a shared responsibility for all countries. Its comprehensive approach involves all actors in society. Sweden is actively working on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and this work is closely linked to the development financing agenda – the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) – and the Policy for Global Development which is

the Swedish version of Policy Coherence for Development. This connection is central to implementation and should be seen as a coherent framework. The most visible example of the Swedish Government's work is the establishment of a national delegation for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

International development cooperation is an important tool for supporting developing countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. But efforts towards sustainable development and poverty eradication cannot be a task only for development policy or development actors. This requires the involvement of a broad range of actors and efforts within and across all policy areas, including development cooperation, trade, foreign relations, climate, environment and migration policies, etc.

Sweden emphasises the importance of good multilateral donorship, is advanced in many areas and is a leading voice in international efforts towards more sustainable development. In this respect, dialogue with member states and work throughout the UN system, the EU, the OECD, multilateral development banks and other international organisations will be crucial. The seat on the UN Security Council will also provide a platform for Sweden to work for international peace and security.

The Paris Agreement is an important milestone in the fight against climate change. Climate change is the defining issue of our time and a key priority for the Swedish Government. With my fellow foreign ministers within the European Union, I am – like many Swedish embassies – engaged in climate diplomacy to follow up and spur implementation of the agreement. Sweden will also, together with Fiji, co-host a high-level UN conference on oceans, which will take place in New York in June 2017.

Ladies and gentlemen, as the world's first feminist government and as a strong supporter of the women, peace and security agenda, it is crucial that we see the gendered effects of conflict, poverty and scarcity of basic resources, such as water. Gender mainstreaming is a strategic approach for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels of development.

It is time to turn political commitments into real action.

Thank you!



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Margot Wallström at the OAS General Assembly

Published 13 June 2016 Updated 13 June 2016

Speech by Margot Wallström at the meeting with the General Secretary and Permanent Observers. The Organization of American States' General Assembly 13 June 2016, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Check against delivery.

Mr Secretary General, fellow Ministers, Ambassadors and Delegates to the OAS,

I am honoured to be here today. I highly value this opportunity to follow the General Assembly of the OAS, and to meet with friends and partners from the Americas. I would like to thank Minister Navarro and the Dominican Republic for hosting this Assembly and giving us the opportunity to visit historic and beautiful Santo Domingo.

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Sweden's relations with the Americas go back a long way in history. They are profound and encompass people, trade and shared values.

Sweden has long been active in development cooperation with many Latin American and Caribbean partners. We are proud of our longstanding partnership with the OAS.

The Americas today is a continent of peace. Democratic rule is well rooted, as is the rule of law. The region has made remarkable headway when it comes to sustainable social and economic development and empowerment including women's rights. The OAS has played, and continues to play, an instrumental role in all these areas.

Sweden will remain a partner. As an observer state and committed friend, Sweden believes that the OAS remains of great relevance. Through its support to demobilisation in Colombia, citizen security in Central America, electoral observer missions, and its human rights system.

Over the years, Sweden has channelled some USD 45 million to OAS' work in these areas. Recently, we have also contributed to the border mission between Guatemala and Belize, and mediation work between youth gangs in El Salvador. In a time of increased polarisation around the world, we need to rally around multilateralism as such.

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Friends,

There is a special affinity between Sweden and Latin America and the Caribbean. Sweden's solidarity with the region is inseparable from the history we share. Swedes have engaged, and still do engage, in solidarity work throughout the region – from Nicaragua and Uruguay to Chile and Colombia.

Many Latinos found a safe haven in Sweden during the difficult time of dictatorships and civil wars, and today they make up a vibrant community.

The Social Democrat-led Swedish Government that took office in 2014 has made it a top priority to revitalise and further enhance our relations with Latin America and the Caribbean.

We have travelled extensively in the region. I have had the honour of participating in the last two COFCOR meetings. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and I have also been privileged to receive many of you and your leaders in Sweden.

From our conversations with you, we see a striking convergence of interests and great potential for deepened partnerships.

One area of interest is climate change. Sweden has taken a leading role on climate finance, being the largest per capita donor to the Green Climate Fund and other major climate funds.

And we are intent on overcoming the obstacles to accessing these funds – because those most in need should be first in line. Over the past year, we have consequently initiated a close dialogue with representatives from your countries to ease procedures and build national capacity to secure access.

Furthermore, we recognise the concerns of the Caribbean partners with respect to measures affecting your correspondent banking relations. A balance must be struck between ensuring compliance with international standards and ensuring access to financial services and financial inclusion.

This is important because we really need investment and trade to create growth – and social policies to make this growth inclusive. Within the EU, Sweden is pushing for free and fair trade relations with Latin America. We are also strengthening our bilateral cooperation with many Latin American partners, in areas such as higher education, research and sustainable technology.

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Friends,

Last year saw several milestones in the area of effective multilateralism. With the agreements concluded in Sendai, Addis Abeba, New York and Paris we have the tools to set our planet on a path towards sustainability. Sweden is committed to taking its share of responsibility to address the challenges we collectively face.

Our candidacy to the Security Council for the period 2017–2018 is part of this commitment. Our long history of multilateral engagement, peacekeeping contributions and development cooperation is proof that Sweden is a partner that delivers on its promises.

As demonstrated by our decision to recognise Palestine, we continue to be a voice of integrity and solidarity – in the spirit of Dag Hammarskjöld and Olof Palme. We are a small and militarily non-aligned country, without a colonial past, that relies on rules and fairness. We staunchly defend the Charter and its principles, and international law.

It is on this basis that we are respectfully seeking the confidence of our Latin American, Caribbean and North American partners to advance the agenda for peace, as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at the 12th Chemical and Biological Weapons Protection Symposium

Published 08 June 2016 Updated 08 June 2016

Speech by Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs at the 12th Chemical and Biological Weapons Protection Symposium, 8 June 2016. Check against delivery!

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this 12th Chemical and Biological Weapons Protection Symposium here in Stockholm.

When the very first symposium of this kind was held, back in 1983, the world was a very different place in many ways. We were in the middle of the Cold War, with arms races extending to both nuclear and chemical weapons. The Soviet Union was involved in an offensive biological weapons programme in disregard of the Biological Weapons Convention. And Saddam Hussein was using chemical weapons against Iran and would soon release such horrors against Kurdish civilians in both Iran and Iraq. Luckily those days are behind us. The end of the Cold War made it possible to move forward on chemical and biological disarmament, and to achieve great things such as the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

However, in other ways, in the words of French journalist Jean-Baptiste



Alphonse Karr: plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose – the more things change, the more they stay the same. Russia's aggression and illegal annexation of Crimea has precipitated a new sense of mistrust between East and West. In the Middle East, the Syrian regime is implicated in using chemical weapons against its own people, and experts of the former Saddam Hussein regime are allegedly helping terrorists develop chemical weapons capability. Attempts to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention collapsed in 2001 and have failed ever since.

Despite such gloomy prospects, the Nobel Prize awarded to the OPCW a few years ago bears witness to the success of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The norms against biological and chemical weapons are almost universally accepted. The destruction of chemical weapons in the possessor states seems to be approaching completion despite serious delays. The UN and OPCW-led missions to investigate and monitor the dismantling of Syria's chemical weapons programme in the midst of a terrible civil war and an ongoing humanitarian disaster show that East and West can accomplish great things when we decide to work together for a common cause.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The theme of this conference – science and technology for protection against biological and chemical weapons – is a vital link in our ability to deal with the dangers of these weapons of mass destruction, and I am proud of the contribution that Sweden continues to make by holding these conferences every three years.

In fact, Sweden has been punching well beyond its weight in the fight against chemical and biological weapons for many years:

- The important contributions of Rolf Ekéus, Hans Blix and Åke Sellström as leaders of successive UN missions are well established. However, it is less known that Swedish experts from the Swedish Defence Research Agency have contributed to all UN investigation teams since the mid-1980s, in Azerbaijan, Iraq and Mozambique. Sweden contributed one of the experts in the small team that developed the agreed guidelines for the Secretary General's mechanism in the late 1980s, and Dr Åke Sellström helped update that system following the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
- The Secretary General's Mechanism remains our best multilateral

response to a potential biological weapons attack. Accordingly, Sweden organised the first training workshop for experts on the UN Roster in 2009. Last year, as the Ebola outbreak became a reminder of the risks involved, the first workshop to consider the setting up of a network of analytical laboratories for biological weapons was held here in Stockholm. Later this year, in cooperation with the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs, Sweden will host a further training session for experts and another laboratory workshop in support of the Secretary General's mechanism.

- At the request of the then UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms Angela Kane – my neighbour here on the podium – Sweden provided air transport resources to the UN investigation in 2013. The chemical analysis laboratory of the Swedish Defence Research Agency in Umeå supported that mission, and continues to analyse samples in support of the OPCW's important work in Syria.
- The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency continues to help the OPCW develop its system for delivering assistance in case of use or threat of use of chemical weapons.

Sweden will continue to provide political, financial and technical support to the international community's capacity to address contingencies involving chemical and biological weapons. Both the UN and the OPCW are continuing to do valuable work to address the chemical weapons issue in Syria, and my Government is looking forward to contributing further to this work as a member of the OPCW Executive Council –since last month – and, I hope, as a member of the Security Council of the United Nations starting next year.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction constitutes top priority for my Government, and a priority that I am personally very committed to. Let me give you a few examples:

- One of the first actions I took as incoming Minister for Foreign Affairs in October 2014 was to have Sweden join the Humanitarian Initiative and the De-alerting Group. We have also become a member of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. All these initiatives are designed to bring new impetus to the nuclear disarmament process.

- Last month, Sweden participated actively in the Open-ended Working Group in Geneva, bringing forth ideas to help elaborate agreed recommendations to submit to the United Nations. Having proposed the setting up of an Open-ended Working Group to move forward on nuclear disarmament at the time of the last NPT Review Conference, I welcome this opportunity, and hope that nuclear weapons possessor States will also engage in constructive dialogue on nuclear disarmament in the future.
- I have re-established an International Law and Disarmament Delegation, with broad participation from the Swedish Parliament, Swedish authorities, think-tanks and civil society, and have asked them to examine more closely and advise me on the issues of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems and a possible nuclear weapons ban.
- I have tasked the Swedish Defence Research Agency with developing a new generation of the Swedish Automatic Unit for Noble Gas Acquisition – or SAUNA system – in support of the monitoring network of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.
- Only a few weeks ago, my Government appointed a disarmament ambassador, Ms Eva Walder, who will represent Sweden in multilateral negotiations and help advance and develop Swedish disarmament policy.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This symposium takes place at a pivotal time, when we are facing new and evolving threats posed by chemical and biological weapons, and I referred to some of these earlier in my statement. I understand that such dangers will be the theme of this afternoon's session. It will also be an important focus of the comprehensive review of UN Security Council resolution 1540 at a meeting two weeks from now. New science and technology for protection, detection and response are vital to defend against these threats, and that means that your work here this week is very important indeed.

I wish you every success in your deliberations.

And I am now very pleased to declare the 12th Symposium on the Protection against Chemical and Biological Weapons officially open.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at Middle East Peace Process-conference in Paris 3 June 2016

Published 03 June 2016 Updated 03 June 2016

## Check against delivery!

Excellencies, colleagues,

We who have gathered here today have done so because we believe in the two-state solution and see the urgency of reaching it. We also want to send a strong political message to the parties.

Let me start by commending my French colleague for the political leadership shown by taking this very welcome initiative – to pave the way for a reinvigorated, result-oriented Middle East Peace Process.

Status quo is not status quo – but a constant deterioration of the situation on the ground. Israeli civilians should not need to fear knife attacks on the streets. Palestinian parents should not need to accompany their children to school in order to protect them against harassments.

The international community must assume its responsibility and take action to save the two-state solution. This is the only viable option to fulfil the long-term aspirations of the both peoples, Israeli and Palestinian, to live side by side in peace and security. Regional actors have a crucial role to play – also with regard to the Arab Peace Initiative – but the responsibility lies with all of us.

What then is required?

I would highlight two of the points here today.

First, there must be land to build on. Repeated decisions to declare Palestinian land as Israeli state land undermine the viability of a future Palestinian state.

Second, the vision must remain alive. The vision of a two-state solution – of Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace, security and prosperity. This is one of the main reasons for Sweden's recognition of Palestine. Another reason is to make the parties a little less unequal.

I speak about hope.

We must do all that we can to keep hope alive. This is especially important for the young generation. Without hope, we risk dangerous desperation.

The work ahead must be based on international law including relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Promoting, protecting and respecting human rights is key for the creation of an environment conducive for a re-launched peace process, and for any such process translating into lasting peace.

Civil society organisations are important actors for democratisation, state-building and economic growth. They can contribute to create peaceful coexistence, influence attitudes and hold public officials to account.

Women should influence and participate in all spheres of society, including at the negotiation table. And we certainly also need to include young people. It is my firm belief that a renewed peace process must take into account their perspectives.

Sweden stands ready to work with civil society organisations, including representatives of private sector stakeholder organisations, in the preparation of an international conference. I would also like to propose a civil society forum to be held prior to an upcoming conference, to secure support and contributions from key actors as well as local ownership of a renewed process.

Today is the beginning of renewed efforts towards a peace process which needs a clear timeline. As representatives of the international community we must stay engaged from now on and build alliances to support this endeavour. And work closely with France and other actors to move this

initiative swiftly forward.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at Africa Day in Stockholm

Published 26 May 2016 Updated 26 May 2016

Foreign Minister Margot Wallström's speech at Africa Day in Stockholm 25 May 2016. Check against delivery.

Dear Friends,

Let me tell you how happy I am to be here today as we celebrate Africa Day in Stockholm. This day is an important occasion. Africa has never been more present in Stockholm and in Sweden. Tens of thousands of Swedes have their origin in African countries. Tens of thousands of Swedes travel to the African continent every year. Tens of thousands of Swedes have African friends and relatives.

Here, in our capital Stockholm, there is always something going on that reminds us of, and confirms, the strong links between Sweden and African countries; film festivals, art exhibitions, guest performances in theatre and dance, concerts, debates, seminars and literature events. There are new African restaurants to explore, fantastic wines from South Africa at Systembolaget, beautiful flowers from Kenya, great coffee from Rwanda, Ethiopia and Burundi, just to mention a few things (and you have probably already noticed the importance of good coffee for a Swede...).

And every week the major daily newspapers here in Sweden are running stories on potential and opportunities in Africa. World Economic Forum Africa a couple of weeks ago attracted a substantial interest from Swedish Business, the Swedish Government and Swedish media. No Swede can have missed the fact that it is time to update our image of Africa. With 54 countries and 1 billion people, Africa's influence, impact, voice and responsibility in a globalized world is becoming more evident by the day. I'm sure you know it already - Africa is a part of Sweden.

For me as Foreign Minister, Africa is constantly on my mind and on my agenda. I have travelled extensively to Africa during the last year. And I have received a large number of African leaders here in Stockholm. Today I'm honoured to host the Foreign Ministers from Benin and from Niger. And the same goes for Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. He has been present at African Union summits in Addis Ababa, at international meetings on Africa and tomorrow he is meeting the Namibian President just a few blocks from here. The Swedish partnership with Africa is based on historic ties. It is being strengthened every day. And it will be increasingly important in the future.

Dear friends,

Sweden's relationship with Africa goes a long way back. What started as support for freedom, democracy and human rights has now developed into a partnership for tackling global challenges of mutual concern.

Today, we see and welcome the strong ambition in Africa's Agenda 2063 and its vision for Africa's advancement. The African Union has made a strong point and an important commitment by announcing 2016 as the 'African Year of Human Rights with particular focus on the Rights of Women'. Gender equality and the rights of women are corner stones for Swedish society and for the Swedish feminist foreign policy. I am inspired by the leadership on gender equality demonstrated by the African Union.

Dear friends,

Last year, the world made significant progress on the climate and development agenda. We also need a new global compact to promote peace and security. A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to speak at the UN General Assembly on issues such as resources for peacebuilding and conflict prevention, true national ownership, solid partnerships with regional and sub-regional organisations – including a strengthened strategic partnership between the UN and the African Union – and the role of women in peace processes.

The second Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld of Sweden, had a strong commitment to Africa. We intend to build on this legacy and forge an even stronger partnership.

Dear friends of Africa,

Sweden will stand alongside the people of Africa in the defence of human



rights, in the struggle for democracy and peace, in the fight against climate change, in the promotion of better education and employment opportunities for young people, in the creation of better systems for migration, and in the many more challenges we face together.

Let me end by concluding that Sweden is, and will continue to be, a Past, Present and Future Partner to Africa.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at A Call to Action for addressing Gender-based Violence in Emergencies

Published 24 May 2016 Updated 24 May 2016

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at A Call to Action for addressing Gender-based Violence in Emergencies: Leadership, coordination, tools and practise – side event with UK/UNFPA/UNICEF/IRC/Oxfam, at World Humanitarian Summit, Istanbul 24 maj 2016. Check against delivery!

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates and excellencies in the audience and in the panel,

I am honoured to welcome you all to this side event, jointly organized by Sweden, UK, UNFPA, UNICEF, Oxfam, the International Rescue Committee and GBV AoR. I am also honored to have such a distinguished panel with a broad range of experiences to bring to the table. Thank you all for joining us today.

## Overarching view

Worldwide, an estimated one in three women will experience physical or sexual abuse in her lifetime. One in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or abused in some other way – often by someone she knows.

Today, almost 60 million people are displaced worldwide as a result of

persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or human rights violations. You have all heard it before - this is the highest number since the Second World War.

Displaced women and girls are one of the most vulnerable groups in the world, due to gender-based discrimination in access to resources, rights and representation

The risk for women and girls to become targets of sexual and gender-based violence is furthermore multiplied in emergencies.

It is unacceptable that women and girls risk being target of gender-based violence. Gender-based violence - which includes, among other things, domestic violence, sexual violence, female genital mutilation, honour-related violence, child marriage, violence against LGBT-persons and human trafficking - is the most extreme form of gender inequality.

Preventing and responding to gender-based violence must be recognised as lifesaving activities from the onset of an emergency and as a key protection concern.

In conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies, humanitarian stakeholders should assume that gender-based violence is occurring and undertake action.

Humanitarian aid is about saving lives, alleviating suffering and restoring human dignity. By tackling gender-based violence we achieve these aims.

## Feminist Foreign policy

Now is the time to walk the talk. I challenge women and men- in leading positions to step up to the plate. Your words are important, but ultimately only your actions count.

It is more urgent than ever to prevent and respond to the horrific crimes against women and girls that are taking place in emergencies such as Syria, Iraq, South Sudan and in the Central African Republic. We have important work ahead of us and I believe that we together can make a difference.

Sweden pursues a feminist foreign and development policy, which is based on four pillars - "R: s" - rights, representation, resources and reality. This policy is committed to accelerating the advancement of gender equality and

women's and girls' rights globally.

Achieving gender equality will require new and coherent approaches, upstream and downstream: including everything from agenda setting, the gathering of information and data, analysis and decision making, the design of interventions, to follow-up and accountability.

Women and girls in humanitarian settings are one of the focus areas of the feminist foreign policy and are given special attention in 2016.

We need to make sure we address this issue in a way that gives real results on the ground. There is a clear gap between what people in humanitarian emergencies experience – not the least women who represent of the victims - and high-level discussions that take place in different fora.

## Call to Action

Sweden believes that more actors can use the global multi stakeholder initiative "Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies" as a platform to increase the efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in humanitarian settings.

Sweden is honoured to be leading the initiative Call to Action in 2016 with the aim to build a truly global coalition to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

The Call to Action is a multistakeholder initiative that was launched in 2013 by the UK and Sweden and gathers States, donors and organisations.

Each partner commits to concrete actions to reach the objectives in the Call to Action Roadmap and report annually on progress.

Call to Actions Roadmap provides a framework to follow-up the commitments being made here at the Summit. It is a tool for humanitarian actors to ensure that pledges are translated into concrete and targeted actions on the ground.

I encourage all states and organisations to endorse the Call to Action and its Roadmap.

## Sweden's commitments

We are convinced about the need to focus more on the root causes of gender-based violence, which are found in gender-based power inequalities and gender-based discrimination. Responsive measures such as providing adequate service to survivors of gender-based violence, is crucial – and lifesaving – but it does not necessarily stop the violence from happening in the first place or prevent it from happening again.

National ownership is key, gender equality takes time and we believe that the issue should be raised in dialogues with Governments. Development actors have a central role in this and we would like to encourage closer cooperation with humanitarian actors, as well as early engagement in emergencies. Sweden is in a strong position to exert an influence, as a major humanitarian donor; we must do more and do better to improve the lives for women and girls in emergencies.

Therefore we will continue to set strong incentives that our partners must live up to and we encourage other donors to do the same.

Sweden will continue to only finance humanitarian projects that take into account the different needs of women and men, girls and boys according to UN's Gender Marker system. We find that creating financial incentives has significantly increased the number of projects designed to meet the needs of women and men, girls and boys. We are demanding gender segregated data from our partners. Humanitarian partners need to ensure that gender-based violence is included in cluster response plans, reports, projects, programmes and pooled fund. All humanitarian partners are required to apply the IASC Guidelines in order to mainstream gender-based violence across all humanitarian sectors. Gender norms surrounding violence must change. Men and boys can be drivers of change and needs to be involved, and take responsibility, in the work on gender equality as well in the fight against gender-based violence. Engaging men and boys directly to transform harmful beliefs, attitudes and behaviours based on gender norms is crucial in order to successfully prevent gender-based violence. Women and girls as actors; humanitarian efforts must recognise that women and girls have much to contribute in preparing for, and responding to, crises They should not be seen as helpless victims or mere recipients of aid. The importance of women's participation and partnership with women's organisations need to be further highlighted.

## The World Humanitarian Summit

The World Humanitarian Summit must lead to political commitments that are

translated to concrete changes for women and girls on the ground. We will use the Call to Action to ensure that commitments are put into action.

I encourage all states and organisations to endorse the Call to Action and its Roadmap. There have been important progress to date, but a lot remains to be done.

This will be further addressed now by our distinguished panellists. I am also pleased to be able to present Jina Moore who is the international women's rights correspondent for BuzzFeed News and based in Nairobi. Moore has reported from Liberia at the height of the Ebola crisis and on women's issues around the world.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the World Humanitarian Summit Plenary

Published 23 May 2016 Updated 23 May 2016

I thank the UN Secretary-General for convening the World Humanitarian Summit, and Turkey for hosting it. With humanitarian needs and global displacement at unprecedented levels, the Summit could not be timelier.

Sweden welcomes the UN Secretary-General's report and I call on all actors gathered here to commit to decisive action that will turn the 'Agenda for Humanity' into a reality. Sweden is committed to strong progress on each of the five core responsibility areas as well as a strong supporter of the Core Commitments presented by the Secretary-General, to which Sweden has aligned itself.

Let us picture the 125 million people in humanitarian need as citizens of a country. This country, the world's 11th largest, is plagued by war, drought and natural disasters. There is not enough food or clean water. Many of its women and children die in childbirth. The children who survive their fifth birthday rarely have the opportunity to acquire a meaningful education.

The human suffering in many humanitarian crises is appalling, and the lack of access to people in desperate need of help something completely unacceptable. I confirm Sweden's commitment to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and to preventing the politicization of humanitarian aid. We reiterate that humanitarian action cannot be a substitute for political solutions. There is a more urgent need than ever before for decisive political action to address the conflicts causing massive displacement and suffering.

Every day humanitarian aid workers lose their life, are wounded or

kidnapped. I note that 90 percent of humanitarian workers killed, wounded or kidnapped are local staff. Similarly, the reports of attacks on medical personnel and hospitals are increasing. Sweden strongly condemns attacks, threats and violence against humanitarian staff as well as medical personnel and hospitals.

Sweden is the fifth largest bilateral donor and a devoted humanitarian actor. As such we are committed to constantly develop and adapt to the ever-changing world and new challenges which occur. In addition to the Core Commitments, we have therefore decided to present around 50 national commitments aiming at making our humanitarian work better and more efficient.

Sweden is committed to leaving no one behind and to putting people at the center of humanitarian action while fully taking into account their specific needs and capacities. We need to include and empower Women and Girls into all phases of the humanitarian work. Build a truly coordinated global approach with ambitious commitments to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in crisis context through the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies. As Chair of the Call to Action in 2016, Sweden commits to increasing the number of governments and civil society agencies by the end of its leadership term.

As a member of the High-level Panel for Humanitarian Financing, I am very committed to undertaking necessary reforms to ensure sufficient and efficient funding. The Panel's report and the Grand Bargain between donors and agencies is a very good step in the right direction towards better humanitarian financing. Sweden aims to provide at least 15 percent of Swedish funding for humanitarian response plans through Country-Based Pooled Funds, where such funds exist and are well-functioning, in line with the target of the UN Secretary-General.

Humanitarian crises develop from many different reasons, conflict being the most common one. Fragile states, inequality, climate change are some of the other underlying causes. It is of utmost importance to apply an overarching perspective to solve any crisis and to bolster better cooperation and coordination between humanitarian, development and other sectors. The humanitarian system alone cannot solve a conflict or a crisis.

The unique nature and mandate of the humanitarian work must be reassured; however we need to find common ways to reach common goals. In an attempt of concretizing this approach, Sweden has developed a Syria



Strategy, aiming at bridging the gap between the two. Through this strategy Sweden tries to finance projects which can fill gaps and create synergies between humanitarian aid and development, to the benefit of those affected by the crisis in Syria.

The World Humanitarian Summit is an opportunity to enhance the international community's ability to respond to increasing challenges. Sweden encourages other stakeholders to take concrete action to make our common humanitarian work more apt and above all, to cease the human suffering of people in need.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the UN High- level meeting on sustaining peace in Africa

Published 12 May 2016 Updated 12 May 2016

High-Level Meeting on Sustaining Peace: Mechanisms Partnerships and the Future of Peacebuilding in Africa  
Thematic Session: Operationalizing the 'Sustaining Peace' Agenda and Review in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities. United Nations, New York, 12 May 2016.  
Check against delivery

Under-Secretary-General Abdelaziz,

Assistant Secretary-General Fernandez-Taranco,

Distinguished Ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to join you this morning.

Let me start by welcoming the resolutions on sustaining peace adopted last month, which comprise nothing less than a landmark.

By agreeing on the new definition of "sustaining peace", we are moving away from post-conflict peacebuilding, and putting prevention at the core of our actions. We have adopted a new bold agenda that goes far beyond the UN Peacebuilding architecture. It is an agenda for the entire system, for all

of us. Tackling the root causes of conflict is at the center. Equally important, it is an agenda that recognizes the inherently political nature of peacebuilding, and underlines the importance of national leadership and inclusivity in all peacebuilding activities.

This ground-breaking shift in mind-set must be celebrated. But not for too long, because we know that the real work is ahead of us, and I am eager to get started. I commend the Office of the Special Advisor on Africa, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the African Union Commission for providing us with this timely opportunity to discuss how to put this agenda into practice in Africa.

Let me touch upon what I believe constitute three core commitments for operationalizing the 'Sustaining Peace' agenda in Africa:

1. First, we need to invest more resources in peace-building and conflict prevention.
2. Second, we need to commit to national ownership and inclusive processes, including women.
3. Third, we must enhance partnerships with regional organisations, in particular the African Union and Regional Economic Communities.

I will focus my remarks today on financing.

Ms Leymah Gbowee said two days ago that if we want peace, we must prepare for peace. I would like to add that we must invest in peace.

For far too long we have been spending billions of dollars on humanitarian and security responses after conflicts have broken out, while investing fractions of those amounts in prevention.

If we are serious about stepping up our collective ability to react before conflicts break out, we need to provide predictable and sustainable resources. Sweden therefore supported the recommendations in the peacebuilding review pertaining to assessed contributions for peacebuilding. We look forward to the Secretary General's options for sustainable financing which will be presented to Member States during the 72nd session of the General Assembly.

As a country that allocates 1 percent of our GNI in official development assistance, and one of the largest contributors to UN development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, Sweden will continue to be a

strong advocate and provider of core funding. But I am eager to go beyond this.

In Africa, we need to define concrete ways for how to provide resources upfront for regional and sub-regional organizations' efforts to respond. ECOWAS is a case in point. Their well-developed infrastructure for early warning and conflict prevention which has proved invaluable time and time again, should be sustainably supported. Similarly, securing predictable financing for AU-led peace operations must remain a priority.

Dear colleagues,

We know too well that money can drive fragmentation if done wrong, or drive coherence if done right. We therefore need to look closely at how we finance peacebuilding.

The current fragmented aid system is limiting our collective impact. A silo approach leads to duplication, unhealthy competition, chronic underfunding of crucial peacebuilding priorities and, perhaps most damaging, overburdening of host governments.

As donors, we have a big responsibility to help break silos. Only then can we effectively tackle the root causes of conflict.

Coherent and joined-up financing is the only way to ensure national ownership and leadership in practice. Somalia is an interesting example. The establishment of the Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility has helped increase coherence in international engagement, and strengthened Somalia's ownership. Pooled funding mechanisms has enabled donors to come together behind national priorities, and putting the Somali government in the lead.

Co-moderators,

I could not end my remarks without mentioning the important role played by the UN Peacebuilding Fund, to which Sweden is a top donor. The risk-taking, political and catalytic functions carried out by the fund is now widely recognized. Yet it is a tragic irony that one of the most effective tools at our disposal has dwindling resources to allocate. I am therefore happy to announce that Sweden will help mobilize resources by co-hosting a high-level pledging conference for the Peacebuilding Fund in the margins of the Ministerial week in September this year. I look forward to continuing these

discussions with all of you.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by the Foreign Minister of Sweden in the Open Debate at the United Nations Security Council

Published 11 May 2016 Updated 11 May 2016

Statement by H.E. Ms Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs, in the Open Debate at the United Nations Security Council, Wednesday 11 May 2016.  
Check against delivery

Mr President, Foreign Minister Shoukri,

Thank you for convening this important debate and for this opportunity to make some remarks on our common challenge of countering narratives and ideologies of terrorism.

This is no doubt one of the greatest challenges we face. Violent extremism continues to plague communities. Terrorism poses a major threat to peaceful, democratic and open societies. It tears apart the fabric of society.

While aligning myself with the statement made by the European Union, I would like to underscore the following:

Firstly, our response must be collective.

The threat of terrorism is transnational. And our response must therefore also be multilateral.

The United Nations has unique and important assets to join up and make available to counter narratives and ideologies of terrorism. Beyond measures

to enhance security, the UN should focus efforts on implementing its Action Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism, which Sweden strongly supports.

Regional cooperation and regional organisations play a key role. The UN can use its convening power and bring together relevant regional, intergovernmental organisations and mechanisms. It can also support and facilitate their work in other ways.

The African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the European Union, the Alliance of Civilizations and the Union for the Mediterranean – they all bring a clear value-added to the global efforts through established programmes, networks, counselling and cooperation.

And in the context of today's debate, I would like to highlight the priority these organisations give to issues related to the media, young people, education and migration. The UN should continue to provide support to this.

Secondly, we need more and different actors.

Governments and multilateral organisations will not suffice. We need to team up with civil society, the media, religious and community leaders, social workers, faith-based organisations and business.

Through them, we can safeguard a culture of peaceful exchange and dialogue – a multitude of actors creating resilience through inclusive dialogue. This will contribute to destructive discourses losing their appeal.

However, we must recognise that more research is needed into the psychology of violent extremism. The narratives – as abhorrent, violent and inhumane as they are – are attractive to some. Our understanding of radicalisation processes is still too poor.

The key to success will involve reaching out to young people. Sweden therefore fully supports Security Council resolution 2250 and the work of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Youth, Ahmad Alhemdawi.

At home, Sweden has appointed a national coordinator to strengthen the resilience of democracy against violent extremism. We see clear and early benefits of this office, including at the municipal level where many possible preventive interventions can be made.

Thirdly, we must target the root causes.

Destructive narratives sometimes fester because of an abetting context. Terrorism and violent extremism feed on grievance – which they do not solve, but nurture. This is the logic of instrumentalisation that terrorist and extremist organisations employ.

Economic and social disenfranchisement, lack of dignity, corruption, democratic deficiencies, and human rights violations are sometimes part of the radicalisation context. And so we must tackle these challenges, resolutely, not least by implementing the 2030 Agenda.

But other threats that underpin ideologies of terrorism and violent extremism must also be addressed forcefully. These include racism, hatred, acts of violence based on Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and Afro-phobia.

We must refrain from all forms of scapegoating and fear-mongering. Targeting a certain religion, region, nationality or ethnic group plays right into the hands of the terrorist ideology that we seek to counter. Interfaith dialogue and education play a critical role in reducing such tendencies.

Mr President,

Terrorists seek to divide and spread fear. And our response – our counter-narrative and our actions – must be one of inclusiveness, unity and trust.

Real dialogue, based on the equality and dignity of all persons, is certainly the best antidote to racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia.

And therefore, the UN – as the guardian of global dialogue among nations and peoples – can and must be at the heart of our global efforts to prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism.

Thank you.





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by the Foreign Minister of Sweden at the UN General Assembly High-Level Thematic Debate on Peace and Security

Published 10 May 2016 Updated 10 May 2016

Statement by the Foreign Minister of Sweden at the High-Level Thematic Debate at the UN General Assembly: “In a World of Risks: A New Commitment for Peace”. New York, 10 May 2016 Check against delivery

Mr President,

Distinguished Delegates,

It is a great honour to be here. I commend President Lykketoft for organising this timely high-level debate, adding political momentum to a new global response to peace, security and development.

Over the past year, landmark agreements have been reached on sustainable development climate change. This has restored confidence and trust in the multilateral system's ability to deliver solutions to pressing global issues.

However, progress in development has not been matched by our capacity to manage international peace and security. War and conflicts have led to hundreds of thousands of deaths, enormous human suffering and mass displacement. And the number of wars and conflicts is increasing.

Let us now use the opportunity provided by the reviews of peace operations to forge a new global commitment for peace – a commitment that restores confidence and trust in multilateral responses in the realm of peace and

security.

We must use the unique position of the United Nations to secure peace and security, and adapt to an evolving global landscape.

Mr President,

I would like to congratulate the General Assembly on the adoption of the milestone resolution on Peacebuilding. The notion of sustaining peace is a bold agenda, putting politics first, and prevention at the core of our work.

This paradigm shift should be celebrated – but without complacency. We have hard work to do. The shift in mindset requires corresponding shifts in our action, in our financial support, and in our partnerships.

My first point on a new commitment for peace is this: conflict prevention and peacebuilding need to be given sufficient attention and resources to be effective.

Sustaining peace is about addressing root causes of conflict and dealing holistically with non-conflict security concerns such as criminality and terrorism. In many ways, development is the best resilience builder.

Comprehensive efforts to sustain peace require long-term, predictable and sustainable financing. As a country that is committed to allocating 1 per cent of its GNI to official development assistance, Sweden – I can assure you – will continue to do its part.

Mr President,

Peacebuilding takes place at national level. Efforts to drive that process can thus only be undertaken by national actors. International actors can provide support, facilitation and accompaniment, but never lead.

Therefore, my second point on our new commitment for peace is that we must recognise the importance of national ownership and inclusion. Sustaining peace in the 21st century, must build on a national and inclusive process, which takes into account the views of the whole population of conflict-ridden societies. It remains particularly important to ensure the effective participation of women in peace processes.

As recent chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Sweden appreciated the fact that we talk with countries, not about countries, or at countries. As I see

it, this is national ownership in practice, and an approach that should be practised by all parts of the international system, in the support for peace.

Thirdly, the demand for UN peace operations is greater than ever. UN peacekeeping is a unique instrument to help countries foster conditions for lasting peace. Swedish troops are currently in Mali, and more than 80 000 Swedish women and men have served in UN peace operations since the first mission was launched by Dag Hammarskjöld.

But the UN cannot, and should not, act alone. It needs partners. Efforts to meet challenges to peace and security will not be successful without the context-specific knowledge, understanding and ability of regional and sub-regional organisations.

Strengthening the relationship between the UN and regional organisations, in particular the AU, as well as securing predictable financing for their efforts, is of utmost importance. As a long-standing partner of Africa, Sweden will continue to facilitate and support efforts to this end.

Mr President,

Sweden stands ready to do its part. We will remain active in UN peacebuilding, continuing to carry the new agenda of sustaining peace forward. We will remain a top donor to the Peacebuilding Fund.

Beyond the peacebuilding architecture, we will advocate that sustaining peace is the responsibility of the entire system, flowing through the three pillars of the UN's work: human rights, development, and peace and security.

- Sustainable resources for peace-building and conflict prevention.
- National ownership and inclusive processes for sustaining peace.
- Solid partnerships with regional organisations, particularly the African Union.

These should be the ingredients of our commitment for peace – a compact for peace. As a candidate for the Security Council for the 2017–2018 term, Sweden wants to take this agenda forward, with vigour and determination.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at high-level breakfast meeting on the centrality of the AU-UN partnership

Published 10 May 2016 Updated 10 May 2016

“Strengthening the global-regional peace and security partnership to respond to the crises of tomorrow – the centrality of the AU-UN relationship” Introductory remarks by H.E. Ms Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden Check against delivery!

Minister for Foreign Affairs Sameh Hassan Shoukry

President of the United Nations General Assembly Mogens Lykketoft

Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson

President José Ramos-Horta

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, friends,

I am honoured to be here today and proud to co-host this event, on behalf of Sweden, together with Egypt and the International Peace Institute.

The GA debate we will engage in today and tomorrow is timely.

Unprecedented numbers of people are fleeing violent conflict. The world is rife with massive human rights violations and emergencies. Violent extremism is threatening the social fabric of states and societies. Climate change, including associated natural disasters and shortages of farmland and

water, poses a real threat to many states.

But efforts to address these issues are under way. Over the past year, we have come together – in Sendai, Addis Ababa, Paris and here in New York – to reach agreements at the highest level on how to tackle these challenges.

Reviews of peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and the role of women in peace and security have been undertaken successfully. We now need to capitalise on the momentum generated by the commitments that we have all made.

Over the years, the United Nations has shown that it is uniquely placed to support efforts to prevent conflict and sustain peace. But we must also acknowledge that in an ever-changing environment, the UN cannot perform this role alone.

Efforts to tackle challenges to peace and security will not be successful without the context-specific knowledge, understanding and ability of regional and sub-regional organisations.

For some time now, we have professed our willingness to move forward on this understanding. We meet here today to discuss how we move from rhetoric to action.

I believe that the new commitment for peace, which will be discussed at the General Assembly today and tomorrow, also needs to contain a solid commitment for African regional and sub-regional organisations, particularly the African Union.

Let me make three points in this regard.

Firstly, an enhanced AU-UN strategic partnership should be mutually reinforcing. Both organisations would benefit from a closer and more predictable partnership.

Secondly, the partnership must encompass conflict prevention and peacebuilding – in keeping with the recent resolutions on the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. They signal a bold and much-needed change in mindset by establishing a new concept of 'sustaining peace'.

Indeed, convergence is evident in the African Peace and Security Architecture and the priorities spelled out in its Roadmap 2016–2020: conflict prevention, conflict management, and post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding.

And thirdly, the partnership should address the need for predictable and sustainable funding arrangements for peace operations conducted by regional organisations under UN mandates. Sweden is deeply committed to making progress on this.

Excellencies, colleagues,

I am honoured by the presence of so many distinguished guests. It will make for a fruitful discussion and demonstrates a political commitment to taking the next steps.

We are not often presented with opportunities to collectively create lasting change in the international response to challenges to peace and security. But we now have one. I look forward to our discussion and to taking our work forward – in partnership.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs on a seminar at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI)

Published 07 April 2016 Updated 07 April 2016

## Arctic Sweden. Check against delivery!

Ladies and Gentlemen; Excellencies; Arctic Friends,

The Arctic is an integral part of Sweden as well as of our neighbourhood policy. It is a core interest for us to preserve the Arctic as a region of peace, stability and cooperation.

Today's conference is an occasion to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Arctic Council.

The success of Arctic cooperation probably has many explanations. I would like to highlight four of them.

1. Respect for international law.
2. The functioning and truly multilateral cooperation amongst Arctic States. This has historically been demonstrated in an ability and readiness to identify common interests and win-win outcomes.
3. Evidence-based policies.
4. And the Arctic Council as a functional body for regional dialogue. The Council gains additional strength and legitimacy through the permanent participation of six indigenous groups, including the Sami.

Twenty years of cooperation in the High North have taught us that functioning international cooperation – as is practised within the Arctic Council – can provide peace and prosperity.

The long-standing bilateral cooperation between Norway and Russia on fishery in the Barents Sea is a good example. There was a time when unregulated competition risked causing irreversible harm to the population of cod and other species in the Arctic. Now, following years of close cooperation between the two countries, a rational system of joint management of fishery resources has been put in place.

According to recent evaluations by ICES, (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea), they assess, and I quote, that "the largest commercially exploited fish stocks (capelin, cod and haddock) are now harvested at fishing mortalities close to those in the management plan and have full reproductive capacity." This is a positive development and will, in turn, give higher quotas for fishermen from Russia, Norway and other countries.

This example can inspire and lead us onwards. It shows the strong link between the cooperative spirit among the Arctic States on the one hand, and our commitment to sustainability and economic development on the other. Economic development and the sustainable management of the Arctic environment must go hand in hand.

Ladies and Gentlemen; Excellencies,

The Arctic Region is not an isolated land of ice. It is not only wild nature and harsh landscapes. It is a region very much defined by the people living there.

The Swedish Arctic is reindeer herding, important mining and top universities. It is breath-taking environments and popular tourist destinations, Facebook storage and space industry.

The North has the right to develop and its people have the right to lead good lives. Just like any other part of Sweden and our population. This underlines the need for sustainable development – economic, social and environmental.

I myself come from the North of Sweden, so I know what I'm talking about. Jobs and schools, well-functioning infrastructure and respect for nature are necessary. Tomorrow I'm going to Norrbotten to continue this discussion about the future of the Arctic.

Ladies and Gentlemen; Excellencies,

The theme of this panel is The environment and climate.



Last year, when I was at the Arctic Conference in Anchorage, Alaska, I was again reminded of the long-term effects of the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989. The lingering impact of such a catastrophe has remained a burden for the recuperation of wildlife as well as vital microbial organisms some 27 years later.

The environment of the Arctic is magnificent, yet fragile. It is overwhelming in its importance for us – our planet and ourselves – and at the same time vulnerable to manmade disasters.

Environment and climate is an important topic on the Arctic Council's agenda. It is an undisputed fact that climate change, if not slowed down, will irreversibly change the Arctic as we know it. It will destroy living conditions and accelerate negative trends globally. The consequences would be devastating.

Now should therefore be the time, in the spirit of COP21, to further raise our level of ambition in the Arctic Council. To stop global warming and environmental degradation.

I am pleased to note that the US chairmanship has put the climate and COP21 in a prominent position on the Council's agenda. I hope that we will now take the next step and turn these intentions into concrete action.

We can look back on 20 years of successful cooperation in the Arctic Council. It gives us a solid foundation to build on when facing our common challenges.

Let's assume political leadership and get down to business. There is a lot to do, and by working together I'm sure we can continue to achieve a great deal.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at 2016 Stockholm Forum on Security and Development

Published 05 April 2016 Updated 05 April 2016

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at 2016 Stockholm Forum on Security and Development, 5 April 2016. Check against delivery.

Deputy Secretary-General, Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Together with SIPRI Director Dan Smith and my colleague Minister Lövin, it is a great privilege and honour to welcome you to Stockholm and the third iteration of the Stockholm Forum on Security and Development.

Friends, we meet at a time of great unrest. Developments in Syria, Burundi, Sudan, Afghanistan and Europe – where some are investing in blankets and others are buying in all the barbed wire – are symptoms of a world order that has failed in its main task: to provide safety and security for all.

Currently, 125 million people have been forced to leave their homes due to wars and natural disasters. This is the equivalent of the eleventh most populous nation on Earth. More than USD 25 billion has been spent on lifesaving humanitarian assistance. While this amount is twelve times greater than fifteen years ago, never before have levels of generosity been so insufficient.

In 2015, global leaders committed to leaving no one behind. The 2030 Agenda is a pledge of solidarity between people, societies and nations. Its promise lies in its recognition that peace, security, climate change and development are closely interlinked.

Ladies and gentlemen, unfortunately many humanitarian appeals remain unanswered. Nevertheless, the solution to violence cannot be – and is not – humanitarian aid alone. The solutions must be political: political problems require political solutions. I will touch upon four key elements:

First, addressing the root causes fuelling conflicts.

The peace and statebuilding commitments agreed upon by the International Dialogue, which Minister Lövin and Minister Pires will speak about shortly, are aimed at making international development cooperation more effective, long-term and inclusive in fragile and conflict-affected states. As we move towards the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, I endorse these commitments wholeheartedly.

Second, empowering women and girls. Acting as feminists. Sixteen years since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, we can firmly state that the promotion of gender equality is not only a matter of women's rights, but more importantly a matter of ensuring peace and security for all.

Third, making conclusive, inclusive and sustainable peace. Almost half of all peace agreements fail within five years, and fragile states are the ones most likely to relapse into conflict. This is partly the result of flawed peace processes.

A successful peace process is not only a matter of reaching a cease-fire. It is also a matter of justice, education, health, reconciliation and fair distribution of resources. No warlord can achieve this. A sustainable peace process lays the foundation for resilient institutions that promote economic, political and social emancipation for all. Peace processes therefore need to be inherently inclusive. Nothing can be discussed about women without women.

Sweden has therefore initiated a network of women peace mediators. The goal is to support women peacebuilders wherever they are and increase women's effective participation in peace processes.

Fourth, stepping up efforts. States and international and regional organisations must focus resources and increase their cooperation in support of peaceful societies.

I welcome the Secretary-General's call to development banks and regional organisations to increase cooperation, improve livelihoods and strengthen

support to fragile and conflict-affected states. Fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda must be our main task.

Ladies and gentlemen, over the next two days you will be discussing the future of peacekeeping operations, how to ensure inclusive peace processes, the complexity of violence, sustainable cities and much more. I am sure that this discussion will assist us in advancing sound policy and ensuring that no one is left behind.

Thank you and welcome.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at Sipri Conference “Nuclear Disarmament: Revisiting the Legacy of Olof Palme” 4 March 2016

Published 05 April 2016 Updated 05 April 2016

Foreign Minister Wallström’s Speech at Sipri Conference “Nuclear Disarmament: Revisiting the Legacy of Olof Palme” 4 April 2016. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to this seminar on nuclear disarmament, a commemorative event marking the 30th anniversary of Olof Palme's assassination.

I am particularly pleased that Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson will deliver the keynote speech, given his personal experience of working closely with Prime Minister Olof Palme. I would also like to extend a special welcome to all the distinguished members of the panel, and a very special thanks to the staff of SIPRI for organising this event, in particular Dan Smith and Tariq Rauf.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a committed internationalist, Olof Palme believed that Sweden – a military non-aligned country with a high degree of credibility with nations great and small – could and should play a special role as mediator and honest broker for international peace and security.

One of Olof's last speeches was in New Delhi, in January 1986. It was his Indira Gandhi Memorial Lecture. He spoke about international security and devoted a large part of his speech to the threat of nuclear war.

He spoke about the devastation caused by the bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The terrifying immediate effects and the long-term, irrevocable consequences.

He pointed out, and I quote:

"A nuclear war can hit all peoples and all States, even those who are furthest away from the theatre of war. But this also means that all peoples and all nations have a right to have a say about these weapons of mass destruction."

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have met survivors from Hiroshima. They described the horrors of the bomb and the after-effects they themselves – and generations to come – have to live with. Nuclear arms are diabolic in their range. They spread pain and suffering over space and time. They reach over vast geographic spaces and further into the future than the human mind can grasp.

Today we see with great concern how new nuclear arms are being developed and used as a threat, and that there are no ongoing nuclear arms reduction negotiations involving the two largest nuclear-weapon States despite the attempts of the Obama administration.

As Olof Palme pointed out in New Delhi: We who live in nuclear-weapon-free States, and our future, are obviously threatened by the nuclear arms race.

It is therefore our right, as well as our duty, to make firm demands for nuclear disarmament.

Building on Sweden's proud tradition as a constructive actor in nuclear disarmament, our Government has re-engaged in the international work against nuclear arms:

- We have joined the Humanitarian Initiative, and re-joined the De-alerting Group. We actively pursue new disarmament measures in the re-established Open-ended Working Group under the UNGA.
- We work tirelessly to support verification of disarmament. Sweden is co-chair of the technical cooperation project initiated by the US, together

with Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), regarding exactly this.

- Recently we announced that we will appoint a special ambassador for international disarmament efforts.
- And I have just returned from the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) in Washington DC, regarding how we can strengthen international cooperation to secure and protect nuclear materials and prevent nuclear terrorism. This is important, urgent and prioritised.

These are just a few examples. We have appointed a Swedish Delegation on International Law and Disarmament, and one of its tasks is to suggest concrete steps for further efforts for international disarmament.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In New Delhi, 30 years ago, Olof Palme stressed the importance of stopping all nuclear tests.

Ten years later, in 1996, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the CTBT, opened for signature. So far 183 countries have signed and 164 have ratified it, including three of the nuclear-weapon States: France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom. It is high time that all States that possess nuclear weapons join the Treaty and that they make good on their NPT disarmament commitments.

The existence of the CTBT, and the legacy of Olof Palme, show that change is possible, even in difficult areas such as nuclear disarmament. So now it is time for us nuclear-weapon-free States to initiate the next step. There is a need for additional international rules and tools to make all nuclear-weapon possessor States disarm. This could include a prohibition, a convention or a framework agreement on nuclear weapons.

A sustainable future for humanity and our planet cannot include nuclear arms. One day, when humanity has achieved the elimination of nuclear weapons, future generations will look back on us, and call us crazy. They will wonder how we could even permit these weapons to exist.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

To conclude, as most of you know, Sweden has put forward its candidacy for a seat in the United Nations Security Council in 2017–2018. In the disarmament field, following our successful contribution for example to the Arms Trade Treaty, we think we can play an active role in the Council's

important work.

With these words, let me once again welcome you to this event. It is now my great pleasure to give the floor to Jan Eliasson, the Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, who will give the keynote speech.

Thank you.





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Georgetown University's Institute for Women, Peace and Security

Published 01 April 2016 Updated 01 April 2016

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the Georgetown University's Institute for Women, Peace and Security in Washington, 31 March 2016.  
Check against delivery!

Dear President DeGioia, Dear Ambassador Verveer, Dear Guests,

It is my great pleasure to be here today. Thank you, President DeGioia, for hosting me and for having invited such a qualified and inspiring audience. Thank you, Ambassador Verveer with co-workers, for all the work that has been put in to organise this event today. It is an honour to be addressing this audience and in particular the students present here today. You represent the future of diplomacy and I view this as an important opportunity for me to convey my thinking on sustainable peace, the link between security and development and the role of women in peace negotiations. I know Georgetown students are wicked smart so I am looking forward to (and admittedly a bit nervous about!) your questions and comments.

I truly appreciate the important work carried out at Georgetown University and Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security! And I am very happy to be able to announce today that the links between the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security are growing stronger. We have just initiated closer cooperation in order to grow the evidence base on women, peace and security, and raise

awareness about critical issues in this field. This partnership will help shape the future of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and I hope that you, as representatives of future diplomacy, will be inspired to take an instrumental role in this important work.

The pursuit of peace and progress cannot end after a few years in either victory or defeat. The pursuit of peace and progress, with its trials and its errors, its successes and its setbacks, can never be relaxed and never abandoned.

Ladies and gentlemen, with the Syrian peace talks slowly unfolding in Geneva, the words of Dag Hammarskjöld remain as relevant as ever.

All of us gathered here today are all too familiar with the horrendous human suffering in Syria. Years of conflict have forced millions from their homes and left hundreds of thousands dead or wounded. A whole generation is growing up without proper access to education, security or healthcare. Syrians have become the largest refugee population in the world.

Yet the true tragedy lies in Syria being only one of many protracted humanitarian crises. Despite the continuous decline of poverty and inspiring technological advances, we increasingly live in a time characterised by conflict, terrorism, extremism and violence.

The rules-based multilateral order that we have come to rely upon for security stands challenged by those who question the most basic principles of peace and human dignity. The fall of the Berlin wall and the promise of liberal democracies was not the end of history.

As we recently marked the second anniversary of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, I reconfirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and its sovereignty over its entire territory.

Since 2011 the number of armed conflicts has increased. New conflicts have arisen in countries such as Syria and Ukraine, while old ones in Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan and Mali have intensified.

According to the UN Refugee Agency, these worrying developments last year resulted in more than 60 million people seeking refuge from war, persecution or other forms of violence – the highest number ever. The average length of conflict-induced displacement is an astonishing 17 years. To many, displacement has become a life sentence.

Rarely before have the links between security and development been so clear. Extreme poverty is increasingly concentrated in fragile and conflict affected states.

The global community is spending around USD 25 billion a year on life-saving assistance to 125 million people devastated by wars and natural disasters. While this amount is twelve times greater than fifteen years ago, never before has generosity been so insufficient. The current humanitarian funding gap is estimated at a staggering USD 15 billion.

Ladies and gentlemen, this cannot continue. Although many humanitarian appeals remain unanswered, the issue of increasing humanitarian needs is not a humanitarian problem. It is political. We desperately need to think innovatively and boldly how to address the root causes fuelling conflict and find means to support sustainable peace.

To do this, I will today discuss three main tasks. Firstly, we need to improve the means by which we prevent conflicts from materialising in the first place. Building societal resilience must be at the core of all our efforts. Secondly, we have to more effectively end conflicts and ensure that peace is sustainable and inclusive. Thirdly, states as well as international and regional organisations must increase their efforts in support of peaceful societies. Security is built together with others – and this is an area where I still see plenty of room for improvement.

Friends, how do we more effectively prevent conflicts? How do we build inclusive social, political and economic structures that constrain the forces of violence?

In 2015, global leaders committed to leave no one behind. The 2030 Agenda is a testament to impressive political will. Its promise lies in its recognition that peace, security, climate change and development are closely interlinked.

The 125 million people in need of humanitarian assistance –equivalent to the eleventh most populous nation in the world – are those who stand at the greatest risk of being left behind. This group is increasingly concentrated in fragile states where governance is weak, where many women die giving birth, where too few children are lucky enough to live beyond their fifth birthday and where those who do, especially girls, do not attend school.

As we prepare for the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul this May, we must recognise that the most cost-effective and sustainable means of

bridging the humanitarian funding gap is to address the root causes fuelling conflicts.

Humanitarian aid can never be a permanent solution. It must be followed by long-term development assistance and efforts to strengthen institutional resilience against both man-made and natural disasters.

International assistance has to increasingly be directed towards conflict and post-conflict situations. Prevention and peacebuilding have so far been systematically underfinanced.

In the report of the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing, we highlighted the value of country configurations, local ownership, improved accountability and flexible funding, as well as a broadening of the donor base. It is vital that greater wealth is also accompanied by greater responsibility.

Sweden recently adopted a new development strategy for Syria and a new regional strategy for the Middle East and North Africa. Key components are long-term and predictable funding, but also a focus on gender equality and civil society. Research shows that gender-sensitive approaches enhance the effectiveness of peace and state building. Societies where women are economically and politically emancipated are less violent.

The empowerment of women and girls is a true example of 'smart politics'. It transcends the divide between hard and soft security and enables effective as well as sustainable peacebuilding. Sixteen years since the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, one can firmly state that the promotion of gender equality is not only a matter of women's rights, but more importantly a matter of ensuring peace and security for all.

Ladies and gentlemen, almost half of all peace agreements fail within five years. Wars are inherently difficult to end and fragile states are the ones most likely to relapse into conflict. Nine out of ten ongoing conflicts were initiated in countries that have already experienced war. This is partly a result of flawed peace processes.

Recent research, and lessons from peace processes in Colombia and the Philippines, demonstrate that women's effective participation substantially increases the likelihood of peace agreements being reached and sustained. Yet even today, in 2016, we are all too familiar with women being

dramatically under-represented in peace and mediation processes.

Last week, during the peace talks on Syria in Geneva, 24 men and just 6 women were sitting at the table. Whilst there is still room for improvement, I am pleased that women played a more prominent role than before. Sweden has supported the opposition's women's advisory committee, which was effective and visible in Geneva and managed to obtain a commitment from the opposition of a 30 per cent quota for women in future governing structures.

A successful peace process is not only a matter of reaching a cease-fire. It is also a matter of justice, education, health, reconciliation and fair distribution of resources.

Peace processes therefore inherently need to be inclusive. Women must actively participate in all decision-making processes at all levels and be active in defining priorities and resource allocation, in times of peace and in times of war. To put it simply: More Women – More Peace. Nothing can be discussed about women, without women.

Wherever I have travelled in the world, from Ukraine to Colombia to DR Congo, I have met brave women who strive to de-escalate violence and promote initiatives for peace, often in very dangerous environments where the personal risks are extreme. The work of these women is commendable and deserves our full support and long-term commitment.

With the resumed talks on the Syrian crisis in Geneva, we have therefore taken steps to not only support Staffan de Mistura and the participation of civil society, but to also support the inclusion of women peacebuilders at the talks.

As part of my Government's broader Feminist Foreign Policy, we have also initiated a Swedish network of women peace mediators and are simultaneously taking part in the development of a Nordic women's mediator network. The goal of this process is not only to strengthen our national capabilities, but more importantly to cut across traditional divides and create cooperative networks with international women mediation teams from across the globe.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, security is built together with others. With several protracted conflicts, the continued scourge of terrorism, systematic sexual violence and the largest refugee crisis in modern history, it is clear

that the international order has not succeeded in its core task to ensure peace and security for all.

For too long the UN Security Council was unable to agree upon a roadmap towards peace in Syria. Despite early warnings, the international system has still not adequately responded to developments in Burundi. Yet at the same time, persistent and patient negotiations between EU3+3 and Iran successfully resulted in an agreement on the nuclear issue. Both the successes and failures of recent times demonstrate the primacy of politics and the importance of multilateralism.

Ladies and gentlemen, we need to re-commit to international standards and norms. I call for a new global Compact for Peace. 2015 was an important year for global governance with worldwide agreements on disaster risk reduction, development financing, the 2030 Agenda and climate change – now is the time to allocate resources and shift the focus to implementation.

As the UN is reviewing its peace and security agenda, it is crucial that it assumes its leading role in ensuring international policy coherence for peace and security. I therefore welcome the Secretary General's call to development banks and regional organisations to increase cooperation, improve livelihoods and strengthen support to fragile and conflict-affected states. Fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda must be our main task.

Similarly, mediation must be recognised as the real weapon for peace. Although both the Security Council and the General Assembly have committed to strengthen the UN's mediation capacity, this has somehow not translated into action. Reform of the Security Council is long overdue. The world is in dire need of a more vigorous Council that fulfils its mandate as the ultimate guarantee for international peace and security.

A more capable UN is also a UN working in tandem with regional organisations. We need to promote processes that strengthen regional interdependence and constrain the forces of violence. I therefore welcome close cooperation between the UN, the EU and the African Union, as well as other regional or sub-regional organisations that might be the first to sense and understand early warning signals before conflicts.

It is necessary that the World Humanitarian Summit in May results in a global commitment to address root causes fuelling conflicts. Both short and long-term aid must contribute to strengthened resilience. Regional organisations and development banks all have important roles in this regard.

Ladies and gentlemen, shifting resources to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, committing to inclusive peace processes and investing necessary political capital in international cooperation for peace is ultimately a matter of political will and proactive leadership. As Dag Hammarskjöld rightly pointed out, the pursuit of peace and progress cannot end in a few years in either victory or defeat.

If we are to prevent new conflicts from arising and effectively end ongoing wars, we need to redouble our efforts to promote peaceful and secure societies for all. It is precisely at times like these – times of crisis and unrest – that we must not hesitate, but instead be persistent in our efforts. Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs 2016

Published 24 February 2016 Updated 24 February 2016

Presented by Mrs Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs, Wednesday, 24 February 2016.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In these times of both hope and despair, Sweden's foreign policy must be active, fearless and constructive. With broad cooperation and diplomacy in our sights, we must affirm and build on the new and historic advances in international cooperation such as the Paris Agreement on climate change, and the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

But at a time when our world is characterised by aggression and division, we must also tackle the challenges. The war in Syria has been going on for five years. Over 125 million people around the globe are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance due to war, famine and poverty. If they were gathered in a single country, that country would be the eleventh largest in the world.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves us well, and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe. It requires an active, broad and responsible foreign and security policy combined with credible national defence capabilities.



Threats to peace and to our security are best averted collectively and in cooperation with other countries and organisations. Sweden's foreign and security policy builds on cohesion in the EU, and on increased cooperation on a broad front: in the Nordic region and the Baltic Sea region, together with Finland; in the UN and the OSCE; with NATO; and via a strengthened transatlantic link. Dialogue and confidence-building measures are important instruments to create stability and ease tensions.

Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected. Our country must therefore be in a position to both give and receive support, civilian as well as military.

The defence policy agreement concluded last year is highly significant. It shows the broad political consensus on the need to strengthen our national defence capabilities.

The defining issue of our time – climate change – constitutes a global security threat. Climate change is a catalyst for war, conflicts and poverty. Sweden will vigorously tackle the tasks contained in the global climate agreement, with a view to achieving the goal of keeping global warming well below 2 degrees Celsius and seeking to restrict it to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

We are adapting the work of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to a broader view of security. Terrorism, climate change, migration, pandemics and human smuggling are foreign and security policy challenges. Migration issues in particular will demand a great deal of work in both the short and long term. At the Ministry for Foreign Affairs we are reinforcing efforts focusing on European security, the UN and global issues. We are also strengthening our organisation abroad. We are in the process of opening a Consulate-General in New York and embassies on three continents. The Government is working on a national security strategy.

The situation in the world calls for a feminist foreign policy that aims to strengthen women's rights, representation and access to resources. In 2015, Sweden helped ensure that the EU appointed a Principal Advisor on Gender, and that a network of women mediators was formed. We will continue our work to involve women in peace processes, in accordance with our action plan. By involving women in the Syrian peace talks, we can help ensure a more sustainable society.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The EU is Sweden's most important political arena. This year, a new EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy will be prepared. Sweden was one of the initiators of the strategy, and we are strongly engaged in the work. One important aspect involves developing the EU's external crisis management capabilities.

The Government will maintain its support for peace, democracy and economic development in Europe's neighbourhood. The European security order must be safeguarded.

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and military presence in eastern Ukraine constitute flagrant breaches of international law. This is the greatest challenge to the European security order since the end of the Cold War. The sanctions against Russia must remain in place until the terms of the Minsk agreements are met. Ukraine must be allowed to regain control over its internationally recognised borders. It is important to help ensure a strong, democratic and stable Ukraine. Sweden supports the Ukrainian Government's reform work both bilaterally and through the EU.

Effective cooperation within the European Union is a prerequisite for peace and prosperity. We need a stronger EU that can continue to stand up for fundamental common values and principles, not least in our European neighbourhood. Internal divisions must be counteracted. It is crucial that the United Kingdom remain in the EU. The agreement struck between the EU heads of state and government paves the way for this. The Government is working to secure a social Europe where growth, a high standard of living and decent working conditions reinforce one another.

The EU needs a new migration system based on shared responsibility and international commitments, with respect for the right of asylum. This is possible if all 28 Member States take their share of responsibility, and if cooperation is improved. With 60 million displaced people, we cannot countenance a situation in which some countries buy blankets while others invest in barbed wire. Our EU policy and foreign policy have an important role to play in resolving these difficult issues.

Sweden will continue to stand up for peace and freedom in Europe, just as we did following the terrorist attacks in Paris last autumn. We were among the first to respond to France's request, and Sweden's support was among the largest. France has welcomed our contribution.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The Government welcomes the UN efforts to reach an agreement on the Cyprus issue. A solution would strengthen the UN's authority and the EU's ability to manage the challenges in its neighbourhood. Sweden has taken a unique initiative for cooperation between Cyprus's religious leaders, who have an important role to play in the reconciliation process.

Sweden is a driving force for the EU's Eastern Partnership. A strong neighbourhood and enlargement policy remains one of the EU's most strategic instruments for promoting peace and prosperity. Keeping the door open to EU membership fosters important reform processes, including in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

The escalation of violence and the human rights situation in Turkey are alarming. Fighting between the Turkish Government and the PKK has intensified. Civilians, particularly Kurds, are being hit hard by violence and curfews. The escalating violence is an obstacle to peace and development not just in Turkey but in the entire region. Sweden is conducting a dialogue with both the country's government and the opposition. It is vital that Turkey and the EU are able to demonstrate tangible progress on the implementation of the joint action plan on migration.

The unimaginable human suffering in Syria is a disaster and a serious threat to the security of the entire region. Half the Syrian population is displaced within or outside the country. The bombing raids on the opposition by the Assad regime and Russia are unacceptable and threaten the fragile peace process. They must cease. All parties must now accept the agreement on cessation of hostilities that has been reached. Through the new Swedish strategy for the Syria crisis encompassing SEK 1.7 billion, we are working to enable people in Syria and its neighbouring countries to support themselves and get an education. We are also increasing our humanitarian support to the country.

We are part of the core group of the coalition against Daesh and are contributing a Swedish armed force to train Iraqi security forces, particularly Kurdish Peshmerga forces. Sweden is working in the EU for a long-term stabilisation mission in Iraq. We are supporting the reconstruction of the country, including by providing support to the areas liberated from Daesh.

Fear and desperation are spreading throughout the Middle East. We must offer hope for the future to young people in both Israel and Palestine. Sweden's recognition of Palestine aims to create momentum for the two-state solution. Renewed international efforts are needed. Sweden welcomes the

French initiative to convene an international peace conference. The objective is to ensure that both Israel and Palestine are able to live in peace and security within mutually agreed borders.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

In North Africa, the Government is providing increased support to the UN process concerning Western Sahara, with the aim of finding a fair, mutually accepted solution to the conflict that satisfies the right of the Western Saharan people to self-determination.

Sweden will continue to support and draw attention to the democratic forces in the region. We will open an embassy in Tunisia in June.

Sweden's ties to the countries in Africa are historically strong. These are now being further strengthened and we are working together in areas such as the economy, education and culture. Cooperation between the Swedish business sector and the growing economies on the continent is increasing.

The African Union is assuming an increasing share of the responsibility for peace and security. Sweden is supporting this process, both politically and financially. The focus of Sweden's commitment to security and development is mainly on the Horn of Africa, Liberia, Mali and the Great Lakes region. Sweden's contribution of personnel to the UN operation in Mali is appreciated.

The continued strong and dynamic economic development in Asia offers major opportunities. The Government is deepening cooperation with India, the world's largest democracy. We are opening an embassy in the Philippines. Contacts between China and Sweden are increasing. China's role in the international arena is growing. Along with this comes responsibility. The Government is continuing its candid dialogue with China on human rights.

Sweden will maintain its civilian and military involvement in Afghanistan. The Government is also strengthening cooperation with Afghanistan on migration issues.

The United States is an important partner for Sweden and we are developing and deepening our already broad cooperation with the country.

We offer extensive support to developing countries for adaptation to a more extreme climate and to sustainable technology. We are strengthening our

relations with the Caribbean nations which, like other small island states, are particularly vulnerable to climate change. During the year, the Government will adopt a regional aid strategy for Asia, including the Pacific nations, with a special focus on climate change.

In addition to our strategic partnership with Brazil, we are deepening our relations with a number of countries in Latin America, such as Chile, Colombia and Peru, where a new embassy will be opened. An action plan for our work with Latin America is being drafted.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Sweden's many years' experience of peace, gender equality and international solidarity have generated a curiosity about our country and what we stand for. The Swedish model attracts interest around the world.

A strong image of Sweden, highlighting culture and values, is important for our long-term relations with other countries. Promotion of exports, imports and investment in Sweden, in close cooperation with the business community, is an integral part of foreign policy and the responsibility of the entire Government.

The Government's export strategy helps strengthen opportunities for Swedish companies in the international market and increase the number of exporting companies. This helps create more Swedish jobs. Two thirds of Sweden's foreign trade goes to other countries in the EU. An effective internal market in the EU is therefore of the utmost importance.

Sweden's economic exchange with the rest of the world and long tradition of free trade has contributed to our prosperity. Free trade between countries lays the long-term foundations for peace and democracy. Consequently, we are opposed to protectionist tendencies in the EU and other G20 countries, particularly measures that affect developing countries.

Sweden is striving to reach a political deal this year in the negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership between the EU and the US. An agreement will be of major importance for growth and jobs and will strengthen the transatlantic link. Respect for people and the environment must be factored into the agreement.

Sweden must be a model for free and fair trade. Corporate social responsibility is a part of this.

In these difficult times, we are one of few countries around the world to succeed in maintaining a generous level of quality aid. We achieve the one per cent target, which remains unchanged. In the course of this year, the Government will present the Riksdag with a new policy framework for Swedish development cooperation.

Our development cooperation is an expression of Sweden's conviction that prosperity around the world must be shared. Looking ahead to the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May, we are working for a stronger humanitarian system, with special focus on women's rights and influence. I am a member of Ban Ki-Moon's High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing, which has presented innovative proposals on how to meet the world's humanitarian needs.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

In a time of global threats, global cooperation is needed. Last year, world leaders reached agreement on the 2030 Agenda and its global development goals, and a new climate agreement. The UN is navigating through very difficult terrain, but progress is being made. The UN is the world's most important platform for international peace and security.

Sweden is an active member of the UN and a critical friend. Our engagement makes a difference and is sought after.

Sweden is pushing for a stronger link between development and peace, an increased focus on conflict prevention and a stronger role for women in peace processes. The Government is also making a long-term commitment to mediation.

This is the basis on which Sweden is now campaigning for a seat on the Security Council. We can provide knowledge, not least of our own neighbourhood. The Security Council must take greater responsibility for peace and security. We want to safeguard international law and limit the use of the veto. The Council must be reformed to better reflect the world of today.

We see with concern that the world's existing nuclear weapons arsenals are being retained and that new weapons are being developed. North Korea's nuclear test earlier this year underscores the necessity of international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

On the other hand, the nuclear deal with Iran shows that it is possible to make progress in the area of non-proliferation.

Sweden is active in the UN, the international Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation and other multilateral projects such as the Humanitarian Initiative. The Government has taken part in the preparatory work ahead of the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington this spring on enhanced efforts against nuclear terrorism.

The Government will appoint a special ambassador for international disarmament efforts.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Respect for international law is fundamental. The Charter of the United Nations confirms the principles of territorial integrity. Genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious international abuses and violations must be prevented and punished.

Journalists have become targets in armed conflicts around the world. Last year, more than one hundred journalists were killed, and far too many are in prison. This year, which marks the 250th anniversary of the Swedish Freedom of the Press Act, we are supporting imprisoned journalists and human rights activists and working for free media and strong civil societies.

Today, working conditions are a European and global issue. The Global Deal is the Prime Minister's international initiative in cooperation with the ILO, the OECD and others for improved social dialogue between employers and employees, aimed at creating better jobs, greater equality and increased productivity.

Safeguarding every individual's right to protection against discrimination is our common responsibility. This includes anti-racism and action against forms of intolerance such as anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, Afrophobia and anti-Ziganism. Sweden is a global voice for sexual and reproductive health and rights, and for the rights of each individual regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Human rights, democracy and the rule of law are fundamental and the Government will therefore present a communication to the Riksdag on this subject, and will appoint a special human rights ambassador.

Support to Swedes who are in emergency or crisis situations abroad is always

a priority activity of the Foreign Service. We take care of consular matters 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The Charter of the United Nations asserts that it is "we, the peoples of the united nations" who are determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

This means that the responsibility belongs to all of us. We who make up the Swedish Government. The diplomats in the gallery. Members of the Riksdag who are preparing their statements. Those of you listening on the radio.

And it is also "we, the peoples of the united nations" who are determined to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights.

Time is of the essence.

But the global progress being made alongside the scourge of war reminds us of the power generated when we work together.

The Government will continue to shoulder its responsibility to help maintain international peace and security – in political consensus and with popular support.





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Sherpa Meeting V, 16 February

Published 17 February 2016 Updated 17 February 2016

(Check against delivery)

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to Stockholm.

I am particularly pleased to be hosting the dinner here at the Vasa Museum – an opportunity for us as hosts to give you a glimpse into Swedish history. Sitting here next to the majestic royal warship Vasa, one cannot overlook the fact that throughout its history, Sweden has been a nation that has fought many wars. Swedish history from the 17th century to the present day can be summed up in three words: war, peace and progress. In 2014 we marked a milestone in Swedish history, as we celebrated 200 years of unbroken peace.

When King Gustav II Adolf commissioned the Vasa in 1625, he wanted it to be the most powerful warship in the world, a 'weapon of mass destruction' of its time. When we talk about the Vasa as a great warship, we often hear the question "Really?". Yes it did not get very far, and yes it was blown over by a light breeze. But for the record, many lessons were learned and the innovative craftsmanship did ultimately result in two-decker warships that sailed the world during the latter part of the 17th century, and throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

But on a more serious note, you have all gathered here in Stockholm to prepare for the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington. Our countries will continue to discuss, at the highest level, how to make our world safer – this is history in the making.

Sweden is strongly committed to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. And these weapons must never be used again. A terrorist acquiring such a weapon would be a nightmare. As stated by President Obama in his historic Prague speech in April 2009, securing all vulnerable nuclear material must be an immediate priority.

Over the past decades, Sweden has worked continuously to improve nuclear security and safety at home, as well as in our neighbourhood. This cooperation began as long ago as the early 1990s, with Lithuania. And we have subsequently continued, notably through cooperation with Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Estonia, Latvia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. We have emphasised the importance of international cooperation, transparency and active information-sharing to build confidence in the effectiveness of nuclear security and other non-proliferation measures.

For Sweden, it is important to make sure that all nuclear and radioactive materials are covered by security efforts – highly enriched uranium and separated plutonium, civilian and military material.

Much has been achieved since the first summit in Washington in 2010. But there is still work to be done. It is crucial that we uphold our strong commitment to improving nuclear security and to creating additional barriers to the proliferation of nuclear weapons and material. Political leaders and experts alike must make sure that the Nuclear Security Summit process maintains its legitimacy and results in lasting, concrete progress.

I wish you every success with your deliberations over the next few days. Your efforts are of the utmost importance to international peace and security.

Contributing to multilateral efforts to maintain international peace and security is in the DNA of Sweden. Sweden therefore stands ready to serve on the Security Council for the period 2017–2018.

Let me also take the opportunity to thank the US Government, in particular the US Sherpa Laura Holgate and her team, for their leadership, dedication and hard work.

And I would like to conclude by saying that I look forward to participate in the Summit in Washington next month.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Margot Wallström at the Meeting of the Small Group of the Global Coalition against Daesh

Published 02 February 2016 Updated 02 February 2016

Meeting of the Small Group of the Global Coalition against Daesh, Rome, 2 February 2016. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking Italy for hosting this important meeting and the United States for its leadership in countering Daesh.

Dear Colleagues,

Our starting point must be a human one – how to end the suffering of men, women and children. The situation in the city of Madaya makes clear what must be our absolute focus: to do all we can to alleviate the suffering of the people. There must be an end to the indiscriminate attacks on civilians and humanitarian access must be granted.

More needs to be done to meet the immense humanitarian needs in the region.

Sweden has received more than 130 000 Syrian asylum seekers since 2011, and over 20 000 from Iraq in the past year alone. We can only imagine the pain of having no choice but to leave your home in order to save yourself and your family.

Since 2011, Sweden has provided more than USD 350 million in humanitarian aid to Iraq and Syria.

Today, I am announcing an additional USD 12 million in humanitarian support to Iraq, to complement our recent USD 4 million contribution to the UNDP Stabilisation Fund and our military training component in northern Iraq.

In Syria, Sweden has provided USD 8.4 million to the Syria Recovery Trust Fund to be used for the stabilisation efforts in Syria.

This year, Sweden is significantly stepping up aid to alleviate the Syria crisis. At the upcoming donors conference in London, my Prime Minister will announce Sweden's new strategy for the Syria crisis to bridge the gap between humanitarian aid and long-term development. The strategy takes a unique, innovative, regional, five-year approach to the Syria crisis.

Dear Colleagues,

We all know that a political solution must be found to the conflicts.

Durable solutions need to rest on political settlements.

The role of the UN is key.

We are at a crucial stage for the political process for Syria. Yet events on the ground continue to undermine diplomatic efforts.

In Iraq, military and stabilisation efforts must be underpinned by an inclusive political process of national reconciliation, and Prime Minister al-Abadi has taken bold steps in this direction.

In Libya, too, a political solution is critical to ending the conflict and the expansion of extremist movements.

It is clear that our actions in the Coalition must be complemented by intensified efforts on the political track for Syria and for more inclusive governance in Iraq.

I commend the efforts to date by the Coalition in its mission to fight Daesh and provide long-term stability to the region. Sweden's commitment is long-term.

But what more needs to be done?

I would like to raise three points where I believe we should have a more in-

depth discussion and act more forcefully.

1) Firstly: What more can we do to counter the financing of Daesh? Funding is critical to its activities. We already know that Daesh is financing its barbarity through bank looting, extortion, control of oil fields and refineries, theft of economic assets and trafficking. We must push for immediate action, through the UN Security Council, the European Union and through cooperation in this Coalition, and other international forums, to stop Daesh's sources of financing.

2) Secondly: What more can we do to counter extremist propaganda?

3) Thirdly: What more can we do to ensure that women are included in the political processes and peace negotiations? In order to secure peace, women and men must be included in efforts to rebuild society. Sweden is facilitating the participation of Syrian women in the talks in Geneva and we are currently providing support to the women negotiators through training in negotiations and external communication.

Mr Prime Minister, Colleagues,

Civilian and military efforts must go hand-in-hand. Military means alone will not give us a solution. Sweden welcomes the proposal to enhance civilian-military cooperation in the Coalition.

As areas are liberated from Daesh, we should consider strengthening civilian and stabilisation capacities to foster four important Rs: resilience, returns, reconciliation and reforms. Sweden believes that the EU – through our long-term perspective on stabilisation – could play a greater role by making use of its crisis management and other tools.

Before ending, I would like to stress that Sweden is concerned by the recent reports on forced displacement and deliberate destruction of civilian homes and property by security forces on the ground. As military contributors to the fight against Daesh, we have a joint responsibility to ensure that such support does not contribute to violations of international humanitarian law and human rights.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the Folk och Försvar Annual National Conference

Published 13 January 2016 Updated 13 January 2016

## Check against delivery.

Mr President, honoured current and former ambassadors, participants, congratulations to Folk och Försvar for 70 years of successful discussion and debate.

For a country like ours, foreign policy is, in many ways, the primary line of defence. By means of an active foreign policy – including cooperation, diplomacy, military operations and confidence-building measures – we contribute to security, together with others.

On Thursday, I came home from a trip to Mali. The Minister for Defence and I met the 250 Swedes on the ground there who are helping with security and protection for the civilian population. It is our largest contribution of troops to an ongoing UN mission, MINUSMA, and is in line with Sweden's commitment to peace and development in Africa.

It consists of an intelligence company and is greatly appreciated. We have sent these men and women into harm's way, to a country with major security, political and environmental challenges.

Mali is a difficult country to govern: it has huge desert areas in the north that are sparsely populated but with important smuggling routes. Ethnic tensions, corruption, internal instability and increasing terrorism, as well as non-existent infrastructure, make implementing last year's peace agreement difficult.

Timbuktu, the city we visited, was poor, sandy and full of litter. There were plastic bags in every tree and bush. The city is largely abandoned since the jihadists took over in 2012. But you can perceive the beauty and charm in the old buildings, including the 14th century mosque.

The link between development and peace is clear – it is vital that people in northern Mali gain access to both security and social services. And the peace agreement must be implemented in an inclusive manner, with women actively participating, with young people and marginalised groups given a voice so as to make reconciliation possible. MINUSMA plays a very important role in implementation of the peace agreement. Our support to the mission and to developments in Mali must be long term.

Mali is both far away and close at hand. If the peace operations fail, the Sahel region will be affected, as will Africa as a whole and also Europe. There is a risk that terrorism will spread and the refugee situation worsen. We must make use of both military and civilian tools. A long-term, stable solution naturally requires social and economic development.

We are currently reviewing how we can increase Swedish support to MINUSMA and the EU training mission EUTM, which we also had the chance to visit, as part of our response to France following the terrorist attacks in Paris. Sweden was one of the first Member States to respond to France, and some EU countries have still not responded. The support provided by Sweden is among the largest. The military components consist of strategic air transport, tactical air transport, support to crisis management operations and support in the form of military equipment, which is now being processed under a separate decision procedure. The support we are offering is requested, conforms with international law and is fit-for-purpose. France has welcomed our contribution.

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Ladies and gentlemen, here in Europe we see increasing concern. Social, economic and political. There are forces acting to tear Europe apart and weaken it. One example of this is the public debate in the UK ahead of the upcoming referendum. Our fundamental democratic values are being challenged by reforms that limit freedom of expression, as in Hungary and Poland.

The success or failure of European integration has direct bearing on the future of our country. As Angela Merkel is fond of saying, "We are united in

Europe – which is fortunate for us." We need a more effective and unified EU, characterised by solidarity.

EU's internal crisis management capacity has stagnated. We must reverse this trend. We must give new impetus to the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy. The global strategy – initiated and promoted by Sweden and expected to be adopted by the European Council in June – comprises an important contribution. Sweden's Government wants to see the EU do more to support Iraq with long-term stabilisation measures in the areas liberated from Daesh. For example, this might involve strengthening the judicial system, implementing democratic reforms or expanding the infrastructure. Europe is both a goal and a means. A united Europe is needed to promote peace and security. We see this in Ukraine.

We must not forget that an armed conflict is taking place there. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and military presence in eastern Ukraine remain flagrant breaches of the UN Charter and international law. And this represents the greatest challenge to our European security order since the end of the Cold War.

Ukraine must regain control of its territory. The Ukrainian government has conducted intensive reform efforts which have involved difficult decisions. At the same time, Russia has done far too little: Russian troops continue to operate in eastern Ukraine and the OSCE does not have access to separatist-controlled areas. In addition, we see increasingly aggressive propaganda in our region. We therefore support free and independent media in the Baltic countries, Ukraine and in the Eastern Partnership countries. Via the Swedish Institute and the Nordic Council of Ministers, we have supported the new independent Russian-language public service station in Estonia. Disinformation and outright lies must not go unchallenged.

In Europe's southern neighbourhood, not least in the Middle East, violence is raging and human suffering is extensive. I'm not sure that it's even possible to understand all the pain caused by the violence. All the hunger, all the rapes, all the distress and panic. More than a quarter of a million people have been killed in Syria. Half the Syrian population is displaced within or outside the country.

There is a risk that the deterioration of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia will obstruct the peace talks. What is needed is dialogue rather than confrontation. Russian involvement in Syria is a complicating factor and the daily Syrian and Russian aerial bombings of non-Daesh areas must cease. I



will soon invite Syrian women to Stockholm to give more of them a voice in the peace negotiations. As in Mali, there cannot be a sustainable peace process if half the population is excluded.

\* \* \*

Ladies and gentlemen,

Political dialogue and diplomacy, trade and international development cooperation are necessary components of Sweden's contribution to a more secure world. This is how true security, in the broadest sense of the term, is built. It is based on the realisation that security only exists if it is mutual – and not diametrically opposed to something else.

We work actively in the OSCE for arms controls, human rights, the rule of law and democracy. We support the OSCE's three independent institutions, all conflict prevention instruments and, since 2014, we have provided targeted support to the OSCE's practical measures in and around Ukraine. Twenty-five Swedes are serving in the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine – SMM – and we provide more than SEK 33 million to the budget.

In a time of global threats, global cooperation is needed. The UN is navigating through very difficult terrain, but progress is being made. Two examples of this are the most recent Security Council resolution on Syria and MINUSMA's mandate. The Government has raised Sweden's profile in the UN, not least through its candidacy to the Security Council for 2017–2018. We want to increase opportunities to act for security in our region and around the world, and to play a constructive role in the organisation. The following are some of the reasons why we are campaigning for a seat on the Security Council:

- Firstly, because ultimately our candidacy is a matter of Sweden's voice in multilateral cooperation. It is a mainstay of our foreign policy. The Security Council is the epicentre of international politics and the only UN body whose decisions are legally binding for all member states.

- Secondly, because Sweden is the sixth largest donor to the UN and a strong voice for global peace and development, as well as for UN reform.

- Thirdly, because a non-permanent member of the Security Council has, for two years, the opportunity to pursue and influence issues, and to contribute to the Security Council taking action where needed. The Security Council

carries out vital activities for peace, including management of the 16 ongoing crisis management operations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place.

As Prime Minister Löfven jointly writes today with his Finnish colleague Prime Minister Sipilä: both Finland and Sweden are outside military alliances. We believe that non-participation serves us well and is an experience to also take into account when we assess current challenges. It contributes to stability and security in northern Europe as a whole.

We stand united in the struggle for respect for international law and for every country's right to make its own security policy choices. We do not believe in abrupt shifts in security policy. Capriciousness and sudden changes are particularly poorly suited to issues that concern our countries' security.

Tensions in our region have increased. We have a difficult parliamentary situation. That gives us all the more reason to act sensibly – to act in a way that is responsible, takes a long-term view and enjoys broad support. Swedish membership of NATO would not help ease tensions.

Non-participation in military alliances rests on two cornerstones: cooperation and a credible national defence capability of our own. The Government is committed to both. I have given some examples of cooperation and as you know, the Swedish defence capabilities are now being considerably strengthened. This must include sustainable provision of personnel. I am among those who would welcome the reintroduction of a modernised, gender-equal version of national service, with both military and civilian components. This is important for reasons of security as well as for cohesion in our country. Imagine if, last autumn, we had had civilians prepared to be called in to help the Swedish Migration Agency, assist at asylum centres or to act as guides.

Based on a broad security analysis, we are now adapting work of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Government Offices:

- Migration, terrorism, climate and pandemics are major foreign and security policy issues. This will also be reflected in the MFA's organisation.
- At the same time, we are reinforcing efforts that focus on European security, our immediate vicinity, the UN and global issues.

- We are also reviewing our security policy analytical capabilities.
- In addition, work is also continuing on the national security strategy that the Prime Minister initiated last year. Those now calling for an expanded Defence Commission were invited to take part in the work on this new strategy last August. They declined. We appreciate that they have now realised the importance of this.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Active efforts for international nuclear disarmament are part of the Swedish security policy. This is constantly relevant, in the last few days on account of the North Korean nuclear test.

We view with concern how the world's existing nuclear weapons arsenals are retained and new weapons developed. Being led into a new arms race does not benefit Sweden or global security. The total impact of nuclear weapons affects us all. The doctrine of mutual annihilation undermines confidence and cooperation. The future cannot be built on fear; a sustainable peace cannot be built with nuclear weapons.

Sweden is working patiently to promote confidence and risk-reduction between the nuclear powers. We act within the UN for initiatives that promote nuclear disarmament. We contribute to technical cooperation to detect nuclear explosions and verify nuclear disarmament. The Swedish Defence Research Agency, FOI, together with the international Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organisation, CTBTO, plays an important role, including earlier in the week in identifying the North Korean nuclear explosion. In all these ways, we promote our own security and contribute to a more secure world.

\* \* \*

Ladies and gentlemen,

We truly live in an age of paradoxes:

World leaders met numerous times last year and agreed on impressive global sustainability goals, an ambitious climate agreement and important financing for development. At the same time the world has not seen such refugee flows since the Second World War, and in Europe we are finding it difficult to address the problem in a coordinated manner. Wars and conflicts, many fuelled by religion and identity, are plaguing mankind.

Last year, six billion of the more than seven billion people in the world had access to mobile phones. Information technology is spreading rapidly. At the same time we see how propaganda is increasing, how lies and rumours are confused with the truth and facts, and how free speech is constantly threatened.

Much is said about the increased number of conflicts around the world and vulnerable civilian populations. At the same time we see how countries that were previously ridden by conflict and ravaged by war rise up, and democratic elections are held in an increasing number of countries.

So it is a challenging time for Swedish foreign and security policy. With the situation around the world so serious, it is more important than ever to let our values form our political backbone. Swedish foreign policy must contain a combination of continuity and the ambition to make a difference.

Democracy and the fight for human rights always challenge strong interests. There are those who say that criticising punishing a young man for his blog, or acting to make two parties in a conflict less unequal, is undiplomatic. But modern diplomacy is not about being nice to everyone. This criticism shows that I belong to that group that still believes that politics is a tool for those of us who wish to bring about change.

\* \* \*

Dear friends,

I wish to say this to all Swedes: the overall interests of this Government are peace and security.

Sweden is a country at peace. We will remain so. And we will help ensure that other countries can also enjoy peace. Just as we do under the UN flag, for both security and development, for example in Mali.

There are many Swedes who get up each morning and, through their profession and commitment, take part in Sweden's contribution to making a more secure world, and so also to Sweden's security. There are Swedes who stay up all night for this purpose. All of you here know this. This includes health care staff, soldiers, engineers, police officers, peace workers, diplomats, volunteers and many more. Mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters who work hard to make the world – and Sweden – more secure. In the interests of the entire nation.

Thank you for your interest and your kind attention.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Reply to interpellation 2015/16:258 by Jan Björklund (Liberal Party)

Published 12 January 2016 Updated 12 January 2016

Statement in the Riksdag 12 January 2016 in reply to interpellation 2015/16:258 by Jan Björklund (Liberal Party).

Mr/Madam Speaker

Jan Björklund has asked me which extrajudicial executions I was alluding to in the debate in the Chamber on 4 December 2015.

The interpellation debate on 4 December 2015 took place against the background of the developments in the two preceding months, which were characterised by violence of a type and intensity not seen in ten years in Israel and on the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. To repeat what I said in my interpellation reply: during these two months, 21 Israelis and 100 Palestinians were killed in connection with knife attacks, acts of violence, demonstrations and clashes. In October alone, 115 Israelis and 7 392 Palestinians were injured, approximately 5 000 of whom were injured in tear gas attacks.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein issued a statement already on 28 October where he indicated that the Israeli response has been reported as being disproportionate to the extent that extrajudicial killing could be strongly suspected. Human rights organisations and international law experts have also expressed similar fears. It is essential that thorough and credible investigations be conducted concerning these deaths with the aim of providing clarity and bringing about possible accountability.

I have, likewise, warned of the implications of disproportionate use of force. As I have made it clear previously in a number of contexts, including on 6 December in a joint statement with the Prime Minister, in that particular debate in the Chamber, I was making an argument based on principles of international law concerning the right of self-defence and the importance of the principles of proportionality and distinction. In this context, as on many other occasions last autumn, I was very clear in condemning the acts of violence carried out by Palestinians against Israelis.

The use of violence – also during occupation – is strictly regulated in international law. All those involved should do their utmost to avoid the use of disproportionate violence. The current situation is untenable. The violence must stop.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at a seminar on the EU integration of the Western Balkans

Published 18 December 2015 Updated 18 December 2015

Europahuset, Stockholm, 18 December 2015. "EU integration of the Western Balkans: Mission to be accomplished". Check against delivery.

Ministers, Ambassadors, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Warmly welcome to Stockholm and to this important discussion on the EU integration of the Western Balkans.

Sweden has always been a strong proponent of deepened democratic and economic reform through EU enlargement.

This line enjoys wide parliamentary and public support.

My late colleague and dear friend Anna Lindh was, as Swedish Foreign Minister, guided by the insight that enlargement matters. She once said:

"Enlargement will add political weight to the Union.

Enlargement will add cultural richness and diversity.

On enlargement, the European Union will not become less European, it will become more European."

In highlighting that enlargement makes the EU more European, this definition reminds us of the important cultural contributions of the countries of the Western Balkans.



Today, the diaspora in Sweden of people born in your countries is significant, roughly 160 000 people.

They have integrated successfully into Swedish society, bringing the Balkans closer to Sweden and Sweden closer to the Balkans.

This also proves an understanding of Europe as defined by cooperation rather than by conflict.

And perhaps most fundamentally, as defined by values.

Sweden's enlargement policy is based on Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union.

Any European State which respects the values referred to in Article 2 of the Treaty and is committed to promoting them may apply to become a member of the Union.

Let me read these fundamental values in Article 2 to you all: respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

\* \* \*

During its EU presidency in 2001, Sweden played an important role in resolving the conflict in Macedonia.

The successful experiences in Macedonia, but also the failure of common action in Bosnia and Herzegovina, were important impulses for the creation of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy.

Insights and lessons learned also showed that the only way to achieve peace and development in the Balkans was by giving unequivocal support to the European perspective for the Western Balkan countries.

This was later acknowledged in the Thessaloniki Agenda in 2003.

Croatia joined the Union in 2013.

Now, many of us are restless to make more progress in the Union.

At the same time, enlargement has always been controversial.

In 1989, Europe was divided.

When Sweden became a member of the EU twenty years ago, the issue of membership of the Baltic States and the states in Eastern Europe was not at all given.

The power of transformation in Eastern Europe came from the citizens' will to live in peaceful and democratic societies, a force that was channelled via the EU enlargement process.

Let this achievement remind us that the historic mission to bring stability, democracy and prosperity to the continent is not yet finished and must continue in the Western Balkans.

My vision is the following:

The question of EU membership for the Western Balkans twenty years from now will be as self-evident as it is for the Baltic States and Poland today.

\* \* \*

Everyone in this room – Member States, Commission and enlargement countries – has key tasks and responsibilities in advancing and fulfilling the integration process in Europe.

The refugee crisis reminds us that the Western Balkans cannot be isolated from Europe.

It also reminds us that the EU process with these countries has proved to be central in addressing challenges related to the Western Balkan refugee route.

However, we must not be complacent, or confuse political stagnation with stability.

Only through dynamic EU integration processes can we build lasting stability.

Commitment needs to be shown by all EU Member States.

This commitment must bring all enlargement countries into meaningful processes towards EU integration during this Commission's mandate.

Individual Member States cannot use bilateral issues to block progress.

The pace of progress on EU integration should be based solely on the merits of reforms and EU alignment.

This is how we guarantee the credibility of a process that has been so successful thus far.

Strict, but fair conditionality.

The EU Commission is the key driver of the process.

We need engagement, commitment and leadership on a high political level, with accompanying resources.

Commissioner Hahn's work in Macedonia recently has shown just how important EU engagement is for the region.

However, and most importantly:

The enlargement countries, on their part, also need to show stronger determination in addressing the key challenges they face.

Just as rule of law, fundamental rights and economic development are at the heart of the Union itself, it is natural that they are now also central to your countries' accession process.

There are major challenges in respect of the rule of law, fundamental freedoms – such as freedom of expression – and organised crime and corruption.

For all of the countries in the Western Balkans, serious efforts are still needed in these areas on your path towards the EU.

\* \* \*

Dear friends,

We need to address common challenges to the EU's fundamental values.

The act of aggression that Russia has committed against Ukraine is the greatest challenge to European peace and security since the end of the Cold War.

It is at times when our fundamental values are increasingly contested that we

need to be even stronger and firmer in our joint commitment to stand up for them.

The EU needs to provide the Western Balkans with a clear path towards membership and to our community of shared values.

New, objective annual country reports add to the credibility of the process.

With harmonised evaluation scales between countries, we are making the integration process more credible, more transparent, and we are adding greater political accountability.

Hopefully, this will also generate more interest among the general public.

Because at the end of the day it is the citizens who reap the benefits of EU membership.

The European Union is and must always be about its citizens.

\* \* \*

In the enlargement process, each country is judged on the basis of its own merits.

However, the ability to cooperate and become reconciled regionally is what builds you a better future.

Therefore, strengthening regional cooperation is of tremendous value.

Much progress has been made over the past two years in the normalisation between Serbia and Kosovo, and in improved relations between Belgrade and Tirana.

Here, the High Representative and Vice-President of the Commission has played and needs to continue to play a key role.

The initiative for this seminar came jointly from the Western Balkan ambassadors to Stockholm – an admirable gesture.

An essential reason for Nordic prosperity is our peaceful neighbourly relations.

Throughout history, we have alternated between cooperating in unions and

fighting wars with each other.

Just like the countries of the Western Balkans, the Nordic countries are similar to each other, yet unique.

Our formalised cooperation is one of the oldest and most far-reaching regional cooperation arrangements in the world.

It is built on common values and a will to achieve results that contribute to dynamic development.

But more importantly, individuals working together, civil society, universities and NGOs have helped strengthen the bonds between our countries.

At the same time, I am aware of the challenges of confronting the recent history of war in the Balkans.

I visited Srebrenica this past summer for the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the genocide.

I have also met some of the women who were victims of systematic rape in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Security Council resolution 1325 and the principle of Responsibility to Protect are important tools developed through painful lessons of history.

However, to achieve peace and true reconciliation, we also need to bring to justice those who committed these horrible crimes.

We owe it to the victims of those atrocities to never forget.

Only in this way can we build true reconciliation.

\* \* \*

Dear friends,

Many people have asked for 'more' Europe in response to the challenges that are arising.

As a former member of the Commission, I find this to be a very interesting debate.

In many instances 'more' Europe will certainly be needed.

But in addition to this, we also need to consider a 'better' Europe.

A Europe that is fit to address the challenges of today and tomorrow.

If we have learned anything from the history of our shared continent, it is that European integration has ended conflicts and wars, brought peace and prosperity, and taught large and small countries to live and work together.

This is, if we pause for a moment and think about Europe's history of wars and killing fields, nothing short of a truly remarkable achievement.

I have described this European path in the following way: bloodshed on the battlefield is replaced with patience at the negotiating table.

Therefore, keeping the door to Europe open for countries aspiring to join is not just a matter of strategic interest for the EU.

It is also a responsibility for the European Union as a whole.

And therefore it is, first and foremost, a responsibility with regard to all the people living in Europe.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Lund, 11 December 2015

Published 18 December 2015 Updated 18 December 2015

## Check against delivery

We are living in turbulent times.

The world around us is changing rapidly, with disintegrating states, refugee flows and terrorist attacks.

There are many challenges. But it is important that we maintain our perspective and do not forget all of the things around us that inspire hope.

Political and economic developments mean that more people than ever before are able to enjoy their human rights. Since 1974, over 90 countries have transitioned to democracy – in a formal sense. Over time, the number of executions has decreased. More children are attending school and people are receiving better care.

Over the past 25 years, two billion people have gained access to sanitation facilities. And even more – 2.6 billion people – have gained access to better water. One in two people have access to mobile internet. Poverty has been halved.

If you are a politically engaged woman, your chances of getting into parliament have doubled compared with 20 years ago. If you live in Nepal they have trebled.

If you are a girl in South Asia today, you have equally good chances as your brothers of being able to attend school. If you live in Latin America, there are more girls than boys in your class.

If you are a new parent anywhere in the world, the chances of your child dying have halved compared with 25 years ago.

This is enormous progress.

Sweden has contributed to this development through its foreign policy and through concrete measures in development cooperation. Without our commitment and that of others, global developments would not have come as far or moved as quickly, whether it be with regard to the fight against the death penalty or efforts to promote education, democracy and women's rights.

Our shared commitment is particularly important today, when authoritarian regimes have gained greater influence, scope for democracy is decreasing and universal rights are restricted.

People in Nigeria who protest against discrimination on the grounds of their sexual orientation are silenced. Activists in Cambodia or Columbia who fight against environmental degradation and forced resettlement are threatened. Journalists who uncover abuses of power in Russia and secular bloggers in Bangladesh are murdered for the sake of their opinions. Women's rights activists in Iraq are subjected to political persecution.

Laws that restrict or forbid civil society organisations have spread throughout the world. Freedom of expression on the internet has declined for the fifth year in a row.

Authoritarian states are not the only problem. Even non-state actors such as ISIS/Daesh and other religious extremists aggressively claim that human rights do not apply.

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After one of the most devastating wars that has affected humankind, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted on 10 December 1948. It established the equal value of all people. Three fundamentals of freedom, justice and peace in the world were identified: human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The Universal Declaration states that: "Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law."



It also states that "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures."

These words created a new set of basic values for a ravaged world and they are more relevant today than ever before. They inspire us all as we stake out the direction of our future work.

In 2016, the Government will submit a communication to the Riksdag on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This will be our compass. It will be based on our values and make visible our tools.

We are now in the middle of this work. We are talking with civil society organisations, researchers and our missions abroad. We are analysing challenges and assessing where Sweden can be of greatest benefit. We must see human rights, democracy and the rule of law as a whole, in which each part is dependent on the other two.

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So what should we do and how should we do it?

Let us start with how.

Sweden must be a strong voice and stand up for, defend and promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law throughout foreign policy.

People across the entire world who are fighting for their own rights and the rights of others provide great hope for the future. They must not stand alone.

And nor should Sweden. Networks and alliances are more important than ever. Sweden must work with states, political actors, civil society, businesses, foundations and individuals. We must be better at collaborating with many actors in broad alliances.

Human rights, democracy and the rule of law must continue to be priority issues in development cooperation. At times like these, support needs to be more flexible, dynamic and adapted to the new situation in the world.

We must dare to take risks, just like the courageous people and movements we support. Progress can mean that one voice is still heard. We must create scope for rapid action with targeted measures.

We must make a difference in individual countries. The Government's reports on the human rights situation in the countries of the world are being broadened to include democracy and the rule of law.

We must sharpen our tools. Work more strategically and pursue the right issues in the right forums. We must create platforms for cooperation with various actors where we jointly pursue issues in the international system. Global forums such as the UN and the development banks, the EU and regional organisations such as the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the African Union, and specialised collaborations such as the Community of Democracies and IDEA are all important arenas in this work.

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So what shall we do? Some things are a given.

Sweden is pursuing a feminist foreign policy. The fulfilment of all women's and girls' human rights is crucial and a prerequisite for democracy and the rule of law. It is also a prerequisite for sustainable peace and security. Gender-equal societies run less of a risk of being affected by violence and conflict. These challenges require that we work on several fronts.

We must combat the abuse, violence and oppression that women are subjected to throughout the world. And we must work for women's political and economic participation and influence. We must continue to be a leading advocate for all people's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Sweden must stand up for and promote democratic institutions and processes. Parties, parliaments and other democratic institutions are weak in many countries. And yet they are crucial for channelling people's interests and resolving political differences in a peaceful way. This is why they must be strengthened.

In times when democracy is challenged and called into question as a social model, there is a greater need to deepen our understanding of the meaning of democracy and to find new ways of strengthening electoral processes with integrity. For every election that is manipulated and abused, there is a risk that the word democracy will come into disrepute. We must protect the meaning of democracy.

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Sweden must strengthen the rule of law on a broad front.

We know that the rule of law is crucial for safeguarding human rights, for non-discrimination and for access to justice. Decent states are states under the rule of law. It guarantees access to ID documents, education and medical care, an independent and free media, rules for entrepreneurship – all of the things we take for granted and that characterise functioning societies.

The rule of law is essential to combating corruption. But corruption also infiltrates and undermines the rule of law. There are also serious consequences for democracy when positions become a way of obtaining money. Society's ability to realise its political intentions is weakened. Corruption challenges human security and is a cause of transnational crime.

We must work on norms, institutions and methods to strengthen the rule of law and combat corruption.

Sweden must fight discrimination in all its forms, regardless of the grounds upon which it occurs, be it religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, impairment or belonging to a minority. The rights of indigenous people must be defended.

LGBT persons human rights have been strengthened in many areas, such as marriage and adoption rights. But discrimination and violence directed at LGBT persons are among the great challenges of our time and must be combated.

The perspective of the rights of the child must be strengthened. All children have the right to a name, identity and citizenship. Today, only one in three children are registered at birth. The right to an identity is the key to a whole host of rights, such as attending school and receiving care or protection.

Poverty as a result of discrimination is, in itself, a human rights abuse. Economic and social rights must be strengthened. The fact that the UN member countries have agreed on a new, shared agenda for sustainable development, including seventeen new, global Sustainable Development Goals is a major step and inspires hope. Implementation of Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and fulfilment of the new goals will be crucial for people's enjoyment of their human rights. Sweden must contribute to this work.

Sweden must defend people's opportunities to assert their rights and demand that both states and businesses take their responsibilities. This is important, not least with regard to working conditions and the right to organise in trade

unions, as well as the right to land and natural resources. Yesterday the Government adopted a communication on corporate social responsibility that will shortly be submitted to the Riksdag.

The Government is relaunching the Policy for Global Development. This means that we are strengthening the rights perspective and efforts to ensure that all policy areas make a coherent contribution to the new global sustainability agenda.

Sweden must also safeguard and strengthen the principle of 'the responsibility to protect', not least with regard to preventing conflicts. This does not apply only to conflicts between states. We must also help to prevent mass abuses by non-state actors and protect civilians. Accountability is a cornerstone. When states themselves cannot enforce accountability, the International Criminal Court is essential.

But in the turbulent landscape of today, these core issues are not enough.

We must also work on some of the challenges of the day in a new and strategic way.

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In some areas we see the need for special measures. Today I can highlight two of these.

The first is widening the democratic space.

At a time when the foundation of human rights is being challenged, free voices are imprisoned and social movements are forbidden, special measures are necessary.

Certain values and rights must be defended.

Freedom of expression, association and assembly are key. Sweden must make a special contribution to protect freedom of opinion and expression, as well as the opportunities of civil society and political movements to exist and act. Regardless of whether people are fighting for freedom of religion or the environment, exposing corruption, pursuing land issues or advocating the rights of LGBT persons, Sweden will fight for their right to make their voice heard.

The courageous people who dare to express themselves and pursue

important issues are crucial for combating human rights abuses. In an increasingly digitalised world, this engagement is taking on new forms. Sweden must be at the forefront in order to understand and strengthen new forms of civilian and political movements.

In the digital era, the media landscape is changing at a tremendous pace. Independent news and opinion formation is essential to ensure the right of citizens to keep informed and thus be able to exercise their democratic rights. The safety of journalists and other media actors must be strengthened. The same applies to the possibility to express oneself freely through literature, film, music and art in all its forms.

We must stand up for people's opportunities to express themselves, organise and pursue their interests. These are the foundations of open societies – and this is how our democracy and welfare have been built.

We need to strengthen activists through networks and increased support. Protection for human rights defenders must be better. We must act more quickly and in a more concerted manner when developments take a turn for the worse. We intend to produce a handbook for work on promoting the values that lie at the heart of the universal rights.

This is both a short-term and a long-term undertaking. Investments in education for the coming generation are essential.

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The second measure is a greater focus on Europe and our neighbourhood.

The European basic values are laid down in the Lisbon Treaty of the European Union: human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights – including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. We must protect these basic values in Europe and in our neighbourhood.

But the challenges are growing. In Russia, civil society is being pushed back and freedom of expression is being increasingly restricted. This also has an indirect effect on the human rights situation in Russia's neighbouring countries, and ultimately on all of Europe. Russian propaganda risk depriving a whole generation of the opportunity to freely form their own opinions.

Europe and our neighbourhood must be a strong foothold for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Sweden must highlight in particular the

importance of independent judicial systems in Europe. Sweden must take forceful action against discrimination of people who belong to minorities. Racism and extremism must be combated jointly by the entire EU.

Sweden must support human rights defenders, brave politicians, journalists, and civil society in Europe and its neighbourhood. Sweden has played an important role in the establishment of two organisations that support democratic forces in the European neighbourhood in an innovative and flexible way – the European Endowment for Democracy and the Prague Civil Society Centre.

Education, exchanges and broad social contacts between countries in Europe and its neighbourhood are becoming increasingly important.

Sweden must continue to fight to ensure that all of Europe takes its responsibility for people fleeing from war and oppression and for people's right to seek asylum.

In order to give force and focus to these measures, they will be designed as individual projects with goals, resources and follow-up. The mandates will be for three years, but the aim is a long-term one.

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We don't know what's waiting round the corner.

It could be solutions to long-term conflicts and democratic openings. It could be more repression and refugee flows.

But one thing we do know.

We no longer find ourselves in a world that lies beyond Sweden.

The rest of the world is here in our midst.

The seeds we plant today shape our own destiny and the future of our children.

I hope that you, too, sow a seed every day. Learn something new. Join an association. Do a good deed. Take issue with an unfounded statement on social media.

After winter comes summer. And you have to have planted your seeds in

time.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström at the high-level meeting on women's role in peace processes

Published 16 December 2015 Updated 16 December 2015

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at high-level meeting on women's role in peace processes 16 December 2015.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, friends and colleagues,

I would like to start by thanking Sven-Eric Söder and the Folke Bernadotte Academy for co-hosting this panel debate on the role of women as mediators and in mediation processes.

I am also happy to see gathered here today a distinguished group of remarkable men and women.

You have all dedicated your professional and personal lives to the promotion of peace.

Your actions remind us that life is about more than self-interest, and that service is about more than self-service. Thank you.

\* \* \*

Ladies and gentlemen,

We stand at a critical moment in time.

Last year, 40 armed conflicts were recorded, up by six from 2013.

This is the highest number of conflicts reported since 1999.



Last year, the escalation of conflicts, coupled with the extreme violence in Syria, resulted in the highest number of battle-related deaths in the post-1989 period.

Conflict and persecution forced an average of 42 500 people a day to leave their homes.

Instead they had to seek protection elsewhere, either within the borders of their own countries or in other countries.

UN-OCHA now reports that the average length of conflict-induced displacement is an astonishing 17 years.

This means that for many, becoming displaced is a life sentence.

We are also facing a 'conflict trap', whereby 90 per cent of conflicts were initiated in countries that have already experienced war.

The problem with war is not only the difficulty of preventing new conflicts from arising, but also permanently ending the ones that have already started.

This is partly a result of failed peace negotiations. Almost half of all peace agreements fail within five years.

Friends,

One reason why we are gathered here is because we know that these failures are not a law of nature.

Research and our own experiences clearly demonstrate that women's inclusion and participation is crucial to achieve effective, successful and sustainable peace and development.

Yet even today, in 2015, formal peace and mediation processes have too often failed to effectively engage and meaningfully involve women.

The statistics of the last two decades clearly show the need for change.

Out of 1168 peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2013, only 18 per cent made any reference to women and gender.

From 1992 to 2011, fewer than four per cent of signatories to peace agreements, and only nine per cent of peace negotiators, were women.

And when it comes to chief mediators the figures are extremely low: Only two per cent were women.

Just a month ago, at the talks in Vienna on the conflict in Syria, 18 men and just one woman – HRVP Mogherini – sat at the table.

Quite clearly, reality still offers considerable scope for improvement.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We need to address this issue at all levels and on all platforms.

We need to ensure that ongoing and upcoming processes result in increased support for women's participation in peace processes.

One step we have taken is to task the Folke Bernadotte Academy with establishing a Swedish network of women mediators, which is also part of the Nordic women mediators network.

The objective of this network is clear. We are not only seeking to strengthen our own capabilities and increase the number of Swedish women actively involved in international peace mediation efforts.

More importantly, we also aim to cut across traditional divides and create cooperative networks with other women mediators from around the globe.

There is a symbolism in the fact that this mission has fallen to the Folke Bernadotte Academy. In 1948, Folke Bernadotte himself was appointed as the UN's first mediator in the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

So, with both statistics and history as the backdrop, allow me to share three thoughts on why we need a Women Mediators Network.

\* \* \*

Firstly, a successful peace process is not only about ending a conflict.

More importantly it is about building inclusive societies and promoting sustainable peace and development.

That is why women must take part in all decision-making processes at all levels and be active in defining priorities and resource allocation.

This must be the case in times of peace, and in times of war.

Wherever I have travelled in the world, from Ukraine to Colombia to DR Congo, I have met brave women who strive to de-escalate violence and promote initiatives for peace.

These women often work in very dangerous environments where the personal risks are extreme.

Their efforts are commendable and deserve our full support and long-term commitment.

However, these peacebuilding initiatives often receive little visibility and are seldom linked to formal peace processes.

Too often women are excluded from formal peace negotiations and we see all-male teams of experts analysing and defining priorities for peace and security.

This has to change, and I promise to do my part.

I will continue to always meet with women's organisations before the official bilateral programme starts during my travels throughout the world.

\* \* \*

Secondly, many conflicts and peace processes are in need of mediators.

The key is often to provide an acceptable third party who can assist the involved parties in voluntarily reaching a mutually acceptable settlement of issues under dispute.

And recent research shows that there is a positive link between women's effective participation, and the likelihood of peace agreements being both signed and implemented.

However, according to the Global Study on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, many actors involved in mediation and conflict resolution remain resistant to including women.

One argument often used is that that they are "wary of overloading the process".

I am convinced that our Women Mediators Network will be a tool for change in promoting women's participation and contributing to sustainable peace and security.

And when our Network brings successful change, the arguments about overloading will evaporate.

\* \* \*

Thirdly, the Women Mediators Network can be a platform for sharing experiences and exchanging information on good and bad practices.

The Network will provide a platform where members can support and learn from each other.

It will be a platform of competent women peace mediators. And by promoting powerful women, we will also promote powerful peace.

\* \* \*

To conclude, I want to emphasise that the agenda on women, peace and security is a top priority for the Swedish Government.

We are committed to continuing to promote women's social, political and economic empowerment and to countering narratives that reinforce negative gender roles.

We believe that it is crucial to engage men and boys in this work – to change behaviour and attitudes.

Last month, the Action Plan for Sweden's feminist foreign policy was adopted.

With this Action Plan, the Foreign Service now has a roadmap to work for gender equality and to strengthen women's and girls' rights, representation and resources.

And one of the objectives of our Action Plan is to increase women's participation in peace processes.

For Sweden, the women, peace and security agenda is about promoting something as beautiful and important as political change.

For that to happen it takes committed and proactive political leadership.

We need to act differently to create peaceful and secure societies for all.

It is precisely at times like these – times of crisis and unrest – that we must not hesitate.

We live in a time when your values must be your backbone, which in turn will help you to do what is right.

So let us be persistent in our efforts to strengthen women as agents for peace.

Thank you.



Speech

# Statement by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on developments in Israel and Palestine

Published 06 December 2015 Updated 06 December 2015

Developments in Israel and Palestine are deeply troubling. October and November were the bloodiest months in more than a decade in Israel, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. In a situation where violence and hopelessness are increasing and the rhetoric is becoming more strident, it is even more important to uphold dialogue and diplomacy as our foremost tools.

Against this backdrop, it is unfortunate that statements on the situation in the Middle East by representatives of the Swedish Government are misunderstood and blown out of reasonable proportion. The most recent misunderstanding concerns the interpellation debate in the Swedish Riksdag on Friday. The Minister for Foreign Affairs did not, as alleged, say that extrajudicial executions occur in Israel; she talked in general terms about principles of international law concerning the right of self-defence and the importance of the principles of proportionality and distinction.

The situation in the Middle East is difficult enough without having to be encumbered by misunderstandings about anybody's intentions. And it is unfortunate when strong reactions are based on false premises.

The Government completely rejects violence against civilians. All acts of terrorism are despicable and must be universally condemned. We seek good relations with both Israel and Palestine. This includes our desire to deepen

and develop our relations with Israel.

The Government's support for a two-state solution in the Middle East peace process is based on the aim that Israel and Palestine will be able to live side by side in peace and security. Israel's security, and our bilateral relationship with Israel, are fundamental components of our commitment to the peace process. We in Sweden seek to be a friend to both Israel and Palestine, while expressing ourselves clearly on issues where there is disagreement.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström speech at the OSCE ministerial meeting in Belgrade

Published 03 December 2015 Updated 03 December 2015

## Check against delivery

Mr Chairman, Mr Secretary General, Ministers, Excellences,

I would like to thank the Serbian Chairmanship and the Chairperson-in-Office, Ivica Dačić, for your efforts over the past year, and for hosting us here in Belgrade.

Sweden fully subscribes to the statement of the European Union. In addition, I would like to highlight some areas of particular importance to Sweden.

First of all, the OSCE plays a crucial role in European peace and security and continues to provide an important platform for dialogue.

This dialogue must be based on the core OSCE principles and commitments we have all agreed to.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the 25th anniversary of the Charter of Paris. These documents, which laid the normative foundation of the European security order, are as relevant as ever.

Regrettably, the European security order as we have come to know it is now seriously challenged by Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine, its illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, and its involvement in destabilising military acts in eastern Ukraine.

These actions constitute a flagrant breach of the Helsinki Final Act and international law.



The principle that all states are fully sovereign and have the right to make their own foreign and security policy choices must be upheld and any acceptance of spheres of influence rejected.

Sweden supports OSCE efforts in and around Ukraine, notably the Special Monitoring Mission, which must be given full access.

Full implementation of the Minsk agreements is critical in order to reach a sustainable political solution in accordance with OSCE principles and commitments, and in full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

For Russia to put itself back on the path toward improved relations with the rest of Europe, it needs to demonstrate, in a tangible manner, its commitment to OSCE principles and international law.

Secondly, an essential feature of the European security order is the concept of comprehensive security, which has at its core respect for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Therefore, the deteriorating human rights situation in parts of the OSCE region continues to be a cause for concern and a threat to our common security. We must not stand idly by while fundamental rights are violated and the space for civil society is shrinking.

The involvement of civil society in upholding OSCE commitments in this field is indispensable. I thank the civil society parallel conference for their valuable recommendations to the ministerial council.

Sweden remains a staunch supporter of the work of the autonomous institutions: the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and the High Commissioner on National Minorities. They are key assets in early warning and conflict prevention.

We welcome the ODIHR and HCNM report on the deteriorating human rights situation in the illegally annexed Crimea. A group of us discussed this urgent matter with the Crimean Tatar representative Mustafa Djemiljov this morning. His account underlined that the OSCE institutions must get access to the peninsula immediately.

Dear friends,

Let me be clear: sustainable development and peace and security can never be achieved if half of the population is excluded.

Promoting gender equality in all spheres of life does not only mean promoting the economic, political and social empowerment of women. It also means promoting development and conflict prevention. The OSCE needs to further develop its capacity in this regard.

Particular attention and resources need to be directed towards the full implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

Thirdly, military developments from 2014 onwards have underlined the need for functioning conventional arms control regimes and confidence building measures.

Sweden advocates the updating of the Vienna Document to reflect lessons learned and the new politico-military realities.

Finally, as we move forward, our primary focus must be on re-establishing respect for the OSCE core principles and commitments and on how the implementation of these can be strengthened.

We must avoid a situation where the existing principles are allowed to be watered down.

We must withstand any attempts at new 'grand bargains' on European security.

If we give up on the core principles now, we will eventually have less security. Not more.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the Nato Foreign Minister's meeting in Brussels

Published 02 December 2015 Updated 02 December 2015

## Check against delivery

Secretary-General, friends and colleagues,

- One year ago the Resolute Support Mission was launched in this very room. Afghanistan now stands at a crossroads and the international community needs to show continuous and long-term commitment to the Afghan people. If Afghanistan returns to a security vacuum, consequences will not only affect Afghanistan and its people but also all of us.

In this context, I would like to inform you that from January until October this year, Sweden has received 22 000 unaccompanied children from Afghanistan. We must prevent an exodus from Afghanistan. To have so many young people leave the country will be a great loss to Afghanistan.

\*\*

And this is my first point: a peace process leading to a political settlement is the only viable option to end the conflict. We would like to commend President Ghani's outreach to all parties in the region to initiate a peace process with the Taliban.

\*\*

Despite some setbacks along the way, the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces have stayed committed to their responsibility. However,

events such as the temporary take-over by the Taliban of Kunduz show that security built solely on military presence is not sufficient.

\*\*

And this is the second point I would like to make: political and democratic reforms must go hand-in-hand with security efforts in order to build a stable and peaceful Afghanistan. Security and development are two sides of the same coin and Sweden is engaged in both tracks. A well-functioning state, at central, regional and district levels is key to ensuring stability.

\*\*

- Thirdly, in order to ensure that democratic development in Afghanistan is consolidated, we must all do what we can to assist. We also expect the National Unity Government to work hard in pursuing its reform agenda concerning the economy, the electoral system, anti- corruption, and building an inclusive society with social justice and full and equal rights for women. We are worried by the reports of continued violence and discrimination against women and of sexual offenses towards children committed by members of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. This must stop.

\*\*

- Finally, Sweden has a long-term commitment to Afghanistan. The Government has proposed to the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) to extend our current contribution to Resolute Support Mission into 2016. In addition, our development support to Afghanistan for the period 2015-2024 has an indicative volume of approximately USD 1 billion. Gender equality is of particular importance for our efforts. We believe that this issue needs more attention now already, and that it has to be an integral part of the future Enduring Partnership – particularly since this will focus on the policy/ministerial level.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Margot Wallström at the University of Helsinki

Published 27 November 2015 Updated 27 November 2015

## Check against delivery

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

The Swedish writer Stig Dagerman once wrote: “In times of no hope there is no worse prison than the future.”

And in times of worry it is a comfort to find strength in the best possible neighbours.

So I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to come to Helsinki and visit the Swedish School of Social Science.

And I would like to begin by stressing that we are living in times that are marked not only by worry, but also by hope.

\* \* \*

Just think, technological developments have placed a mobile phone in the hands of half of all the people on Earth.

And just think, the world’s total GDP doubled between 2000 and 2013.

We achieved the goal of halving the proportion of the world’s population living in extreme poverty some five years ago.

This year we can add to that the fact that infant mortality rates have also been halved compared with 1990.

And the work continues.

Earlier in the autumn, 193 world leaders agreed on 17 global goals that will lead us towards sustainable development.

And keeping climate change as far below the two-degree limit as possible is the goal for the next major summit: COP21 in Paris.

The negotiations on our biggest common challenge begin in just six days' time. Among a series of key global actors, we see a Union made up of 28 countries in our part of the world.

This European Union has the goal of promoting peace, the well-being of its peoples and the Union's values.

These values are defined in Article 1a of the Lisbon Treaty as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights – including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

Society in these 28 countries is to be characterised by diversity, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and the principle of equality between women and men.

When these values are ruthlessly attacked while people in one of these 28 countries are having a Friday-night drink, attending a concert or watching a football match, the very same Lisbon Treaty contains a mutual defence clause:

Article 42(7) states the following:

If a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

\* \* \*

Ladies and gentlemen,

I will soon talk about the difficult challenges facing Sweden, Finland and the entire EU.

This sombre list includes terrorism, the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War, and Russian aggression.

But let us take on these challenges with an awareness of the relatively strong position that we have created through Nordic and European cooperation.

Let us take on these challenges in the knowledge that fear is poor counsel.

And let us remember that our love for a life based on the values of the European Union is stronger than the terrorists' love of death.

\* \* \*

In recent times the skies have wept over Paris, but also over Ankara, Beirut, Sinai, northern Nigeria, Bamako in Mali, and other places.

At the weekend the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution drafted by France giving member states the right to take "all necessary measures" to combat ISIL.

All of the UN's 193 member states are now being urged to "reinforce and coordinate" efforts to prevent and repel terrorist attacks carried out by ISIL, al Qaida and other terrorist groups.

A united UN illustrates that the terrorist threat is not a battle of the civilisations, or a conflict between the West and the countries in the Middle East.

An entire world stands side by side against the terrorists' barbarism.

But our recent history has taught us that such situations call for global leadership.

We must keep a cool head and a warm heart.

And we must be able to hold several thoughts in our heads at once.

\* \* \*

France has requested support in accordance with the mutual defence clause I cited earlier.

Sweden, Finland and the other EU Member States have given their full support to France's request.

The EU is a community of solidarity. We want to make an active

contribution to the concrete and credible implementation of the EU's solidarity agenda, including the mutual defence clause.

It is important for Sweden's security that this happens.

Support measures will be undertaken bilaterally, from each individual country in direct relation to France, and in line with the UN Charter.

This support may be political, civilian or military and does not affect Sweden's non-participation in military alliances.

Our support to France is also in line with what is known as Sweden's national declaration of solidarity, which is a complement to the EU's mutual defence clause.

The declaration of solidarity stresses that security is achieved in cooperation with others.

It also confirms that Sweden will not remain passive if another EU country or Nordic country is struck by disaster or comes under attack, and we expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is similarly affected.

It is too early to say what form Sweden's support will take.

Sweden is already making a concrete contribution to the coalition against ISIL in northern Iraq.

An armed force comprising 35 people is helping to train the Iraqi armed forces with the aim of strengthening its capability to fight ISIL.

Sweden is also a donor to the UNDP's Stabilisation Fund, which is supporting the rebuilding of areas liberated from ISIL.

But France is now going to consult the individual Member States. France will then make a more specific request for support.

Sweden takes a broad approach when we look at what we can contribute, not just militarily, but also from a range of possible civilian and political measures.

This includes supporting the political process in Syria – not least in attempts to unite the opposition – and a broad aid commitment.



Sweden and France had also already agreed on deeper cooperation on the more long-term task of preventing extremism and battling radicalisation.

As we now take new steps, I would like to stress that Sweden and Finland are maintaining ongoing contact with the aim of coordinating and complementing each other's support measures.

My visit today to my foreign minister colleague Timo Soini should be seen as an expression of the great importance that Sweden and Finland attach to coordinated action.

\* \* \*

Ladies and gentlemen,

A peaceful solution to the conflict in Syria is absolutely essential.

As a result of the conflict, Syria has become a safe haven for ISIL.

To eliminate ISIL in Syria it is of fundamental importance that we work towards a political solution that results in a transitional government to replace Assad's authoritarian regime.

The 'Vienna process' has now been transformed into the International Syria Support Group.

Progress was recently achieved on the role of the UN, a possible ceasefire, a timetable for the peace process and confidence-building measures.

The UN Security Council has a special responsibility in efforts to combat ISIL and achieve peace in Syria. This also applies to efforts to stabilise Iraq through dialogue and a policy of inclusion.

Sweden also supports the efforts of UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura to reach a political solution in Syria and I look forward to meeting Mr de Mistura in Stockholm later this week.

At the same time we must work even more actively on the root causes of terrorism throughout the Middle East and North Africa.

Peace and democratic development, like hope for a better a future for people who are struggling – not least young people – is absolutely crucial.

Sweden has contributed extensive humanitarian support to the region and the people affected by ISIL.

We must deprive ISIL and other terrorist groups of their recruitment base and draw attention to the breeding ground for violent extremism.

In this context, we must not forget all the people who are fleeing from terrorism, conflict and war.

This brings me to another of our challenges.

\* \* \*

The Emigrants is the name of the first book in a series of novels by Vilhelm Moberg.

In these books we follow a few of the more than one million Swedes who sought a better life in America.

Do you remember what the second book is called?

It translates as The Immigrants. And it was followed by the third book: The Settlers.

The names of these books remind us that flight and migration have several dimensions.

Migration creates opportunities for development, both for the country of origin and the recipient country – and not least for our fellow humans who are fleeing or migrating.

We are currently experiencing the worst refugee crisis since the Second World War. Around the world, 40 conflicts are ongoing, of which 11 are full-scale wars. Over 60 million people are displaced.

For us in Sweden it is a given that we should help. It is an obligation, it is a matter of solidarity – but it is also about our positive experiences of the various facets of migration.

Immigration to Sweden has made us considerably richer as a country. This applies to all areas of society.

The newspaper Dagens Nyheter recently reported how the increased

reception of refugees is leading to increased consumption and growth in Sweden.

A little further down the road it will be absolutely crucial that those who come to us enter the labour market.

It is necessary that our social systems can manage to offer schooling to the young people coming here alone. That we have homes for the families who have fled from ruins. That there are education and routes into the labour market as people build a new future in our country, in line with the pioneering spirit in Vilhelm Moberg's books.

We need to achieve all of this on a scale that has already required an enormous effort, through which many people have already been helped.

But Sweden is currently receiving about 30 per cent of all unaccompanied refugee children coming to Europe.

Around 8–10 000 asylum seekers are arriving every week.

By the end of the year it is expected that over 160 000 people will have found their way to Sweden, of whom 35 000 are without a parent or guardian.

We have reached a point that requires a greater sense of community in the EU, including with regard to the refugee situation.

Sweden expects two things of our EU friends in the here and now.

Firstly: we expect all EU countries to demonstrate solidarity and ensure that we share the responsibility.

Secondly: we expect EU countries to stop hoping that temporary measures and old solutions that have already failed will be able to resolve a common and long-term challenge.

Giving protection to people who are fleeing from war is an international obligation under well-known conventions. And this must be done in a dignified and efficient manner.

If the EU has a common external border it is everyone's responsibility.

And when refugees come to this border they are everyone's responsibility.

The decision to redistribute 160 000 refugees that was recently adopted by the EU must be implemented in practice.

Centres known as hotspots must be established with the aim of registering and distributing the people coming to the EU via a permanent redistribution mechanism.

An orderly system also requires that those people who do not have grounds for asylum return home.

At the same time, the EU must continue to assist countries such as Jordan and Lebanon where the situation in the refugee camps is in some cases acute.

The EU must also strengthen its cooperation with the countries in the Western Balkans, and not least with Turkey, which has a crucial role to play in managing the flow of refugees to Europe.

And remember that these wars are constantly occurring. People will continue to flee.

The EU must therefore respond with solidarity and sustainable systems that guarantee both an orderly reception and the right to asylum from war and the barbarism of terrorism.

And remember that societies characterised by diversity are far from being a naive aspiration. They are the reality of our time.

Of course, it is a challenge to receive far more people than planned. I know that Finland has also seen a considerable increase in numbers of asylum seekers.

That is why the countries of the EU must become better at exchanging positive experiences and policy proposals that facilitate integration.

We must see today's challenges as an opportunity to develop the way we build our societies.

It is an opportunity to tell the story of how our Nordic model builds on openness and how 500 million people in the EU can indeed cope with receiving 1.5 million refugees.

The alternatives – attempts to close the borders, only a handful of EU

countries taking in the majority of all those fleeing, returning people to the hell of war in Syria – have one thing in common.

They are worse than the option of European solidarity, a more orderly system and shared responsibility.

\* \* \*

Ladies and gentlemen,

Hillary Clinton has described the job of foreign minister in the following way: “The problems we inherited... new, often unexpected events... opportunities presented by an increasingly networked world.”

And it is true that the situation in the world places great demands on the simultaneous capacity of the entire international community.

The act of aggression that Russia has committed against Ukraine is the greatest challenge to European peace and security since the end of the Cold War.

First Russia’s occupation and illegal annexation of Crimea were completed.

Then we saw how the Russian aggression continued through support to ‘separatists’ in eastern Ukraine.

Russia has not hesitated in the slightest to use advanced Russian units for this purpose, both across the border and in Ukraine.

All of this is accompanied by a propaganda machine at full throttle.

Although the refugee crisis and the terrorist attacks are demanding more of our attention, we must still focus on the east.

On the one hand we hopefully have the same goals as Russia in the fight against ISIL.

A responsible and cooperative Russia is an essential component if the conflict in Syria is to be resolved.

But it is still unacceptable to send soldiers into Ukraine, to contravene the UN Charter and to take another country’s territory.

This is why we must maintain the consensus in the EU – and also the transatlantic consensus between the EU and the US – in our view of Russia's actions in Syria and in Ukraine.

This is why, on both sides of the Atlantic, we must extend our sanctions regimes that are based on the Russian aggression.

This applies for as long as Russia does not live up to the Minsk Agreements.

It applies for as long as Ukraine has not regained full control of its internationally recognised border.

And at the same time we must remain steadfast in providing our support to Ukraine and its reform efforts.

I recently visited Ukraine with Lithuania's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Linas Linkevičius.

This trip strengthened my conviction that the EU has an obligation to help Ukraine to succeed, and that Ukraine can succeed.

There are strong expectations of change, not least from young people and from Ukraine's dynamic civil society.

This is perhaps Ukraine's greatest and most important asset.

Ultimately, it is about respecting the right of countries to choose their own future themselves. This is of course something that must apply to the EU's entire eastern neighbourhood.

At the same time, we must maintain both our bilateral relations and the EU's contacts with Russia, which remains our, and the EU's, largest neighbour.

We have to talk to one another and cooperate where possible.

The many contacts between Russian, Swedish and Finnish society – between individuals, between municipalities and counties, and between organisations – are hugely valuable.

A critical dialogue is essential between neighbours.

\* \* \*

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Centre for Climate and Security recently reported that in Pakistan today, more people die of heatstroke than in terrorist attacks.

And remember that the revolution in Syria was preceded by a four-year-long drought that was the worst in modern history.

This is the face of our modern world. Most things are linked.

The fact that climate change has a clear security policy dimension is just one of many examples of a broader security concept.

At the same time, we see crises and challenges in several directions, which as I said places demands on our capacity to act on several fronts simultaneously.

Navigating this landscape requires courage and patience.

Courage to stand up for the values that are the foundation of EU cooperation and that are contained in the solemn introduction to the Lisbon Treaty.

And patience, which allows us to manage to do several wise things simultaneously and over time, even if this may seem difficult in the short term.

European countries need to regain their self-confidence, because we need strong European cooperation.

And this means that we cannot have an EU à la carte where you choose when the EU's fundamental values apply to you specifically.

We need strong European cooperation where we act together and in solidarity, irrespective of whether we are facing aggression in the east, war and refugee flows in the south, an attack, a crisis or a disaster in an individual country, or climate change, which none of us can avoid.

Together, we are Europe.

\* \* \*

Ladies and gentlemen,

In times of worry and great challenges, security policy must be handled responsibly, with a long-term approach and with broad parliamentary support.

It therefore sent a clear signal to the world around us when five Riksdag parties – from the Government and the opposition – agreed on Sweden's security and defence policy earlier this year.

Sweden is sticking to its course. We remain clear. We do not participate in military alliances and will not apply for membership of NATO.

Non-participation in military alliances gives us freedom of action in standing up for Sweden's sovereignty and working for security in our region. We pursue the same line as previous Swedish governments, which I stressed most recently in the Swedish Riksdag just the other week.

An active, broad and responsible foreign and security policy is Sweden's primary line of defence. It is based on cohesion among EU countries and increased cooperation on a broad front: in the Nordic region, the Baltic Sea region, the UN and the OSCE, with NATO and through the transatlantic link.

Sweden's defence capabilities are now also being strengthened. The Swedish Government is reversing a trend and investing a great deal in reinforcing our defence.

Exercise activities will be further developed and the capability of defence units enhanced. Appropriations will be raised by SEK 10 billion in 2016–2020. Together with previously approved increases this will mean a rise of SEK 17 billion, or 11 per cent.

The Swedish Government is deepening its bilateral and multilateral security and defence policy cooperation projects.

Among these cooperation projects, the Government values Finnish-Swedish cooperation very highly.

Sweden and Finland are currently developing defence cooperation both vertically and horizontally.

Let me also underline that in terms of security policy choices, consultations between Sweden and Finland are of course crucially important.

\* \* \*



Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity of being able to speak once again at the University of Helsinki.

During the Swedish State Visit to Finland in March, I spoke in English about Sweden's feminist foreign policy.

But now it is of course nice to be able to speak in my own native language at the Swedish School of Social Science.

I would therefore like to finish by reading something beautiful in our Swedish language by the writer and poet Ragnar Thoursie.

This poem was written in 1951, but it places our current challenges in perspective:

Through the murmurs of time in the pines, through the flight of the years on  
the cirrus wing, broad and strong,

yearns from night to day, from distress to freedom, away from fear, the  
pursuit that binds us all.

An open city, not a fortified city, we build together.

Its light strikes up towards the solitude of space.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the ASEM meeting in Luxemburg

Published 05 November 2015 Updated 05 November 2015

Luxemburg November 5th 2015 Please check against delivery

Dear friends and colleagues from Asia and Europe,

The Asia-Europe Meeting process is entering its 20<sup>th</sup> year, and over these two decades it has evolved into a multi-faceted forum for exchange between our two continents.

I believe that a forum that involves the free exchange of ideas, as ASEM does, contributes to better and necessary understanding between peoples, and between states.

Today, I would like to take this opportunity to talk about climate change and the connection between climate and security.

Countries have now presented more than 150 Intended National Determined Contributions (INDCs) from all over the world, representing coverage of around 90 per cent of global emissions. This is unprecedented.

However, this first round of INDCs on the table clearly does not keep the global temperature rise well below 2 degrees.

The Paris Agreement needs to ensure that we do much more.

Climate change and security are intimately intertwined.

We may think we are facing many security challenges today, but unfortunately a great deal of evidence indicates that in the foreseeable future the less fortunate will face mass migration, while the well-to-do will have to invest enormous sums to secure cities and infrastructure.

In a globalised world, insecurity, disease, extreme weather, migration and depleted biodiversity will affect us all.

The challenges may seem insurmountable, but I am cautiously optimistic.

ASEM represents 63 per cent of the world's population and 60 per cent of global GDP. Asian growth has been double that of Europe for the past two decades, Asian investments in green tech are larger than the rest of the world's put together, and the rise of the Asian middle class may be one of biggest changes over the next generation.

According to some projections the Asian middle class will grow to more than 3 billion by 2030, up from slightly over a half a billion today. Whatever the numbers, the trend is evident. This means that Asian growth will be key for global growth and in lowering global poverty, but it will also tax our environment if not managed well.

In a world that is becoming more and more affluent, a growing urban middle class will want clean air, safe food and cities that are safe from extreme weather. And they will hold their leaders accountable. I believe that Asia will have no less an interest in climate and security than Europe, and probably even more.

We are in this together: south and north, west and east.

Our global institutions and international forums, including ASEM, must be recognised as key parts of the equation. We can only solve global challenges together, be it through the Global Goals and Agenda 2030 or COP21.

Climate change has a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable and poorest people in the world. It adversely affects security in fragile settings where governance is weak and institutional capacity to deal with shocks and crises is low.

We therefore need to support capacity-building and strengthen resilience. Sustainable management of natural resources, livelihood programmes,

disaster risk management, and mechanisms for early warning and early action are equally important aspects in this regard – including here in the ASEM context.

A legally binding agreement in Paris is a crucial step towards a more sustainable and peaceful world.

We have to be concrete about what we need to do, and how to get it done. Adaptation and climate finance are essential parts of a new climate agreement. Sweden remains committed to the goal of mobilising USD 100 billion annually by 2020.

Furthermore, we need to provide extra financing to help fragile states build capacity. This is why Sweden has made the largest per capita commitment to the new Green Climate Fund.

Sweden is also one of the largest donors to the Adaptation Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Global Environmental Facility.

ASEM friends, we represent the bulk of humanity, the global economy and investments in green solutions. We are also on the receiving end of many of the challenges of today and tomorrow. We do not merely have an interest in working together on the climate and security nexus. We have a duty to do it: for ourselves and for our children.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs's speech at the Open Debate of the UN Security Council on the Peace process in the Middle East

Published 24 October 2015 Updated 24 October 2015

Check upon delivery.

Mr. President,

I would like to thank Spain for organising this timely meeting and Foreign Minister García-Margallo for presiding over it. I would also like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson for his remarks this morning.

I welcome the Secretary-General's visit to the region and as he said in Jerusalem earlier this week the terror attacks against civilians are deplorable. Such random attacks make every place unsafe and every person a potential victim. We are deeply concerned about the deaths on both sides, and almost two thousand injured, so far in October, a vast majority of them Palestinians. The Israeli response must be proportionate. All perpetrators must be brought to justice. Excessive use of force must not be used. A further escalation of violence would have unforeseen consequences. There is an urgent need for leadership, responsibility and restraint.

Mr. President,

One year ago, Sweden decided to recognise the State of Palestine. Our recognition aimed at making the parties to the conflict less unequal. It aimed at supporting moderate Palestinians and Israelis alike, providing a positive input into the dynamics of the dormant Middle East Peace Process, and to send a clear and convincing message of hope to younger generations that there is an alternative to violence and to the so called status quo. As we have

seen in recent weeks, the absence of hope is one of the greatest challenges facing the prospect of peace and the vision of a two-state solution.

It is not too late for initiatives for de-escalation, confidence building and peace in the region.

- Now it is time to create conditions for a results oriented peace process, including confidence building measures such as settlement freeze;
- Now it is time for the full implementation of agreements reached between Palestine and Israel;
- Now it is time to end the isolation of Gaza, and for all factions in Palestine to cooperate;
- Now it is time to remove obstacles for economic development in all of Palestine, including access to area C and Gaza;
- Now it is time for an international recommitment regarding clear parameters and realistic time frames for negotiations and an end to the occupation.

We must not lose track of the real goal: a negotiated two-state solution and an end of the occupation where both Palestine and Israel can live side by side in peace and security. This Council should lead the way.

Mr. President,

The recent escalation of the violence in Syria is deeply concerning. The present situation more than ever calls for complete, genuine and concrete support to the Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura and a political solution. This humanitarian crisis is the world's largest in modern time. Sweden shoulders its responsibility in three ways: Firstly, we now receive 3,000 Syrian refugees every week and we have so far received 100,000, although I know it is a small number compared to the neighbouring countries Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. Secondly, Sweden has so far contributed with more than 213 million US dollars in humanitarian assistance. Thirdly, in addition to our humanitarian assistance Sweden will allocate another 220 million dollars over the coming five years through a new Syria Crisis Strategy. I therefore encourage all others present here today to step up your engagement.

Throughout the conflict in Syria, women and girls have been targeted on the basis of their gender. Sexual violence is systematic and widespread amongst many warring parties, including used as a tactic of terror by ISIL. But Syrian women are not only victims but also actors. That is why I am hosting a meeting on Syrian women peacebuilders tomorrow morning.

Mr. President,

Lebanon is one of the most affected countries by the conflict in Syria. Domestic stability in Lebanon is key. Lebanese leaders need to set their differences aside and elect a new President without any further delay. But Lebanon also needs and deserves more international support. Lebanon, led ably by Prime Minister Tammam Salam, is hosting more than 1.2 million who have fled the war in Syria. Sweden's substantial humanitarian assistance and our contribution to the Trust Fund for Lebanon, managed by the World Bank, will soon be complemented by increased development assistance. I strongly encourage others to follow suit.

Mr. President,

As mentioned, the vicious cycle of direct and indirect violence has to be broken. Security cannot be achieved through bombs or rockets, war or violence, humiliation or threats. Genuine security can only be achieved through peace. We need to take our responsibility. We owe this to the children and future generations in Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and other countries in the region.

We need to restore the hope of a better future.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Opening Statement by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström: "Syrian Women Peacebuilders"

Published 24 October 2015 Updated 24 October 2015

Side event in the UN on Syrian Women Peacebuilders, 23 October 2015. Check upon delivery.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here this morning with Kvinna till Kvinna, our strategic partners and so many friends – Ms. Zainab Bangura, SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Mr. Yannick Glemarec, Deputy Executive Director of UN Women. I also wish to extend a warm welcome to Ms. Rabheb Alwany from the Badael Research Institute. And I am pleased that we will also hear from Special Envoy Mr. Staffan de Mistura, whom I know – in his challenging task that we fully support – is a key advocate for the inclusion of Syrian women in the political process.

We are here today to learn from the experiences of the brave and dedicated women from Syria who amid violence and terror – and despite the risk to their own and their families' lives – continue the struggle for peace and security. This is a fight that does not involve weapons or brute force – but dialogue and conflict resolution. Your bravery and commitment deserve our full support.

The escalation of the violence in Syria in recent weeks is deeply concerning. The crucial efforts towards a political solution are more important than ever. The present situation calls for complete, genuine and concrete support to the Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura and his efforts. The fact that the international community, including the Security Council, has failed to stop



this blood-bath for four harrowing years is simply disgraceful. None of the Security Council's resolutions on Syria have been implemented.

The humanitarian crisis in Syria is the world's largest in modern time. Parallel to intensifying our efforts in support of a political solution Sweden shoulders its responsibility in three ways. Firstly, Sweden is now receiving 3,000 refugees from Syria every week, amounting to 100,000 since the outbreak of the conflict. After Germany we have received the most Syrian refugees in Europe, although I know it pales compared to the neighbouring countries Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. Secondly, Sweden has so far contributed more than 213 million US dollars in humanitarian assistance to alleviate the Syria crisis. Thirdly, in addition to our humanitarian assistance, Sweden will allocate another 220 million dollars over the coming five years through a new Syria Crisis Strategy. The Syria crisis is unprecedented in recent times so our support needs to be unprecedented.

Ladies and gentlemen,

When I was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden a year ago, I was asked about my priorities, and my answer was clear: we will pursue a feminist foreign policy. This means that we aim to strengthen the human rights of women, improve women's access to resources and increase women's representation – in times of war, and in times of peace. It also means that we will apply a gender perspective in our political analyses and include and listen to the voices of both women and men. This event today is a good example of what a feminist foreign policy means in practice. It means combining our political and diplomatic work with development cooperation, and providing space for and giving a voice to women peacebuilders.

I welcome the unique report that is being launched today. It reveals how active Syrian women are in efforts to de-escalate violence and promote initiatives for peace, in a very dangerous environment where the personal risks are extreme. I applaud your work and look forward to hearing about opportunities for the growing women's movement for peace.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me take this opportunity to highlight three areas that Sweden prioritises in our work for women, peace and security in Syria.

Firstly, indisputable evidence, as highlighted by the recently launched Global Study, has shown that women's participation leads to more sustainable

peace. Women's organisations and women leaders have knowledge, experience and expertise that must be brought to the table. We simply cannot afford to ignore this in Syria. In the search of the political solution that Syria so desperately needs, political participation for all must be secured: both women and men must feel that they have a stake in their future. The importance of adequate representation of women in the political process is key and we are in close dialogue with the Special Envoy in this regard.

Local peacebuilding efforts carried out by women – often with great impact but little visibility – must be supported. The work of *Kvinna till Kvinna* in Syria, which Sweden supports, is crucial in building networks of agents at the grassroots level to drive change bottom-up. Sweden has worked with female peacebuilders, women's networks, women human rights defenders and lawyers and activists in Syria during the last three years, in strong partnership with *Kvinna till Kvinna*. The report launched here today is one example of our support.

Secondly, conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence is a core security challenge that must be firmly addressed. Throughout the conflict in Syria, women and girls have been targeted on the basis of their gender. Sexual violence is systematic and widespread amongst many warring parties, and used as a tactic of terror by ISIL. Women and girls from Syria are sold as commodities among extremist groups and are repeatedly exposed to horrendous acts. According to the UN Independent Commission of Inquiry, Assad regime forces have arrested female lawyers, journalists and peace activists. Women have suffered rape and other forms of sexual violence by regime personnel in detention facilities. It is time to speak up louder against these horrendous crimes, to support the victims, prevent stigmatisation and make sure that perpetrators are brought to justice. Sweden fully supports SRSG Zainab Bangura in her tireless efforts to address the issue of sexual violence in armed conflict and look forward to taking part of the details in her seven point plan.

Promoting women's participation in prevention, mitigation and peacebuilding efforts is imperative and key to countering radicalisation and terrorism. Empowering women and girls is an essential part of building peaceful communities that are less susceptible to the threat of radicalisation. Yet women's potential as peacebuilders to challenge extremist narratives, promote social cohesion and prevent radicalisation remains an untapped resource, in Syria and elsewhere. This needs to change.

Thirdly, I would like to draw attention to the plight of women human rights defenders. We know that fighting for peace and women's rights often comes at a high price. Women human rights defenders that Sweden has consulted have all spoken at length about the threats and risks they face. One of these women had a fresh bruise on her face – from an assault by unidentified men who wanted to frighten her into silence. Such acts are all too common. Women human rights defenders across the globe face threats, stigmatisation, harassment and violence. They are being persecuted, beaten and sometimes even raped or killed. This is unacceptable. We need to step up efforts to prevent these acts and protect those who struggle for peace and gender equality.

Sustainable solutions and measures to address root causes of violence are necessary. Sweden vows to continue promoting women's social, political and economic empowerment and to counter narratives that reinforce negative gender roles. We believe that it is crucial to engage men and boys in this work – to change behaviour and attitudes. We will also highlight the importance of supporting and finding better methods to protect women human rights defenders in our revised National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, which will be adopted next year.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Finally, I wish to mention that the new strategy for the Syria crisis that I mentioned will include efforts to strengthen the capacity of Syrian civil society and women's networks to contribute to peacebuilding. Gender equality, human rights, and prevention and rehabilitation of sexual violence will be top priorities in this strategy.

Last week, the Security Council adopted a new Women, Peace and Security resolution (2242). Let us use this resolution as an opportunity for all of us to do better and step up efforts to advance women's contribution to lasting peace and security. As a representative of a feminist government I can assure you that we are fully committed to do just that – do better – in our work to enhance gender equality and promote women as actors for peace.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs at UN Side Event on “Supporting Women’s Role in the Implementation of the Malian Peace Accords”

Published 22 October 2015 Updated 22 October 2015

Side Event initiative, by UN Women and Sweden, United Nations, New York, 21 October 2015. Please, check against delivery.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is indeed extremely timely to meet here today to focus on women’s role in the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. The Agreement, finally signed by all parties on June 20<sup>th</sup>, provides a historic opportunity to address inequalities, the distribution of resources, democratic decision-making, the rule of law and bringing those responsible for human rights abuses to justice. It must also be an opportunity to ensure the active involvement of both women and men. The low level of female participation during the Algiers negotiations must not lead to low female participation in the implementation process and institutions.

I welcome the commitments made to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security through the adoption of Mali’s second National Action Plan. The peace accord and the new National Action Plan are important first steps that lay the foundation for the work to come. But now is the time to move from policy to action, from

words to deeds. All parties must stand by their commitments to the peace agreement and the ceasefire if people are to experience a tangible peace dividend. Strong commitment to the political process is necessary to reach long-lasting reconciliation and prosperity.

The primary responsibility for delivering on the commitments made rests with the Malian parties. Nevertheless, the international community must remain firmly engaged and assist in making the implementation of the peace agreement and the National Action Plan transparent and effective. You can count on Sweden's continued support in this regard.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Enhancing gender equality and the contribution of women to peace and security are top priorities for the Swedish Government. We believe that promoting gender equality not only means promoting the economic, political and social empowerment of women – it also means promoting development and conflict prevention. When I was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden a year ago, I was asked about my priorities, and my answer was clear: we will pursue a feminist foreign policy. The aim of this policy is to increase women's representation, strengthen the human rights of women, and improve women's access to resources – in times of war, and in times of peace. Let me elaborate on these three key areas of common interest.

The first aspect is **representation**. Women need to be represented in decision-making bodies at all levels. Only through women's active participation can we transform agendas so that the needs and interests of women are truly reflected and addressed.

Peacebuilding needs to be *inclusive*. Indisputable evidence, as highlighted by the recently launched Global Study, has shown that women's participation leads to more sustainable peace. This is no less true in Mali. We welcome the fact that the overall objective of Mali's National Action Plan is to promote women's participation in the implementation of the Malian Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. The engagement of women in this critical phase of the transition will support the process of cementing a fragile peace and also contribute to expanding the basis for a more inclusive and democratic post-conflict Mali. Women have a key role to play in building trust and reconciliation, guaranteeing the provision of basic state services in rural areas and informing the population about the content of the peace accord. They can play key roles in the disarmament and reintegration process. Let us step up efforts to ensure that this opportunity – to ensure an inclusive peace

process – is not an opportunity missed.

The second key aspect is **rights**. It should be evident and go without question that women's rights are human rights. Unfortunately, this is far from a reality today. Women's rights are far too often seen as a separate and marginal optional extra. This has to change. We must continue our efforts to ensure equal social, economic and political rights. In Mali, increased access to education, to income-generating work and to sexual, reproductive and maternal health would not only bring a better socio-economic situation for women but also contribute to the economic growth of the country as a whole.

Gender-based and sexual violence remains a real obstacle to women's empowerment. Last year's report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence reported allegations of conflict-related sexual violence against women and girls in Mali. Progress in the investigation and prosecution of sexual violence was reported to be limited due to threats against local monitors and the constrained capacity of national justice institutions. Displaced women have faced an elevated risk of sexual violence due to the lack of community-based protection mechanisms and the proximity of armed groups to population centres, making it particularly dangerous to access isolated water points and forests.

It is of the utmost importance that the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali addresses conflict-related sexual violence by bringing perpetrators to justice. This is necessary to reach reconciliation. The reconciliation process also has to be careful when releasing individuals in custody, so as not to release persons linked to human rights violations, including conflict-related sexual violence.

We need to ensure accountability and strengthen legal mechanisms to stop impunity for these crimes. Nothing short of zero tolerance can be accepted. We welcome the fact that Mali's National Action Plan contains objectives and actions to build the capacity of institutional and community actors in preventing conflict-related gender-based violence.

The third aspect is **resources**. To achieve real change, political commitments need to be accompanied by sustainable financing. Women's organisations need our moral, political and financial support. Sweden is committed to continue to support and fund women's organisations in conflict and post-conflict countries. We have increased this support threefold over the last five years, but we will strive to do even more.

We foresee a commitment of 140 million USD in our development cooperation with Mali over the next five years to support peace, stability and sustainable development throughout Mali. Our continued support to development in Mali will be conflict and gender-sensitive and it will strive to support inclusive peace and state building.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to conclude by reaffirming my Government's commitment to support the Malian peace process and women's active participation long term. Sweden is present on the ground as a long-term cooperation partner to the Malian people, as well as contributing troops to MINUSMA. Around 250 Swedish men and women are present in Timbuktu, contributing to the implementation of the mission's mandate of bringing stability and protecting civilian women and men, boys and girls.

Recently my Government also decided to engage the Folke Bernadotte Academy in supporting peace and stability in Mali. The Folke Bernadotte Academy is the Swedish government agency for peace, security and development, and it has an overall mission to support international peace and crisis management operations. Contributing to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Mali will be one of its main objectives.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Now it is time to accelerate our efforts. Sustainable development, peace and security can never be achieved if half the population is excluded. Let us ensure that women's voices are heard and promote women's active and meaningful participation in building the future of Mali.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# European cooperation – Why we must stay united in times of internal and external challenges

Published 08 October 2015 Updated 08 October 2015

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at a public lecture for students and interested parties, at the Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius, in connection with the Swedish State Visit to Lithuania, 8 October 2015. Check against delivery.

Ladies and gentlemen,

*“Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan.*

*It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.”*

These were the words of Robert Schuman, one of the founders of what we now call the European Union.

The extraordinary enlargement of the Union in 2004 is one of the greatest achievements in modern European history.

Our Baltic Sea no longer divides us. It unites us.

I am proud that Sweden – and not least my predecessor and friend the late Anna Lindh – worked hard for enlargement.

Lithuania and the other Baltic States answered with impressive commitment to progress and reform and joined the EU as full members and equal partners. Back then, European politics were steeped in confidence.



The EU adopted a foreign policy strategy around that time, just a little over a decade ago. It began with the following words:

*Never so prosperous, so secure, nor so free.*

This description of our European continent was, at that time, a fitting one.

But we are now living in times of greater uncertainty, in which these words sound less convincing.

In the first draft of the EU's new foreign policy strategy, scheduled to be adopted in 2016, the wording has changed.

The world, it says, is "*more connected, more contested and more complex.*"

Our challenges are visible.

They are visible in our neighbourhood, in Russia's aggression in Ukraine, and war, terrorism and refugee crises in Europe's southern neighbourhood.

And they are visible globally, where shortcomings in our common institutions sometimes occur.

Our humanitarian systems are overstretched by the world's forty armed conflicts, of which eleven are full-scale wars.

Refugee flows are reaching the levels seen during the Second World War.

It is against this backdrop that we have to shape foreign policy.

This is why I will talk about the challenges we have to tackle together. I will begin with the EU, then move to the EU's neighbourhood and conclude with some global challenges.

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In his State of the Union address a few weeks ago, President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker said: "*This is not the time for business as usual*".

The economic and financial crises have indeed been followed by political tensions, both within Member States and within the framework of the EU as a whole.

We need to regain a steady course forward, where cohesion, solidarity and a new dynamic will help us achieve the goals of peace and prosperity that are at the heart of our Union.

What Europe needs today is an EU that focuses on employment, sustainability, and security in our neighbourhood.

Our common goals must be lower unemployment, decent working conditions, higher growth and a better political climate in which people's frustration is not exploited, and populism and short-sightedness no longer triumph.

European countries need to regain their self-confidence, because we need strong cooperation for a Europe that is competitive.

Now, as before, this cooperation must be open to new members. And it must also be the basis of a strong common European foreign policy.

The new European Security Strategy must therefore build on sound analysis of changes in the rest of the world and changes to the EU's relative strength.

The Strategy, due to be completed next year, will guide the 28 Member States in shaping how the EU should best relate to the rest of the world.

Also, much of what we have gained from this cooperation sometimes seems to be forgotten or taken for granted.

So let's remember what Robert Schuman said: concrete achievements create solidarity. We need a strong Lithuania and a strong Sweden in a strong European Union.

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Our second challenge is the European neighbourhood – our neighbourhood.

It has been our ambition to contribute to peace, freedom and stability. But we are now forced to deal with serious crises on several fronts.

I am deeply concerned about developments in Russia.

The act of aggression that Russia has committed against Ukraine is the greatest challenge to European peace and security since the end of the Cold War.

This is accompanied by a propaganda machine in full gear.

We have together agreed the fundamental rules that must apply to European peace and security. These must also apply to Moscow, now and in the future.

The right of all countries to determine their own future must be respected.

We therefore insist on the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

The current cease-fire and the continued discussions in the Trilateral Contact Group are steps in the right direction towards achieving the purpose of the Minsk agreements: withdrawal of all Russian troops and military equipment, and re-establishment of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, including Ukraine's full control of its border.

The EU needs to stick together to hinder and contribute to make more costly any form of Russian aggression.

We must also stand firm in the face of Russian trade sanctions and intimidation, despite the economic pain.

And we will remain one of the most ambitious countries in our efforts to help Ukraine succeed.

The success of the Ukrainian reform process is of enormous strategic importance to Ukraine, to the broader region and to the EU.

In at least three areas, the EU and its Member States could do more: additional financial support, support of energy reforms and support to reforms needed for visa liberalisation.

At the same time, we must maintain both our bilateral relations and the EU's contacts with Russia. It is, after all, our largest neighbour. We cannot give up on people-to-people contacts with Russia.

To the east, we also have the Eastern Partnership countries.

We will give our full support to the countries wishing to pursue the path of European reforms and European integration. The choice is their own, and there should be no place for threats or interference from any other nation.

At the recent summit in Riga, both the EU and the six partner countries reaffirmed their support for this joint project.

It will not be easy, but I am convinced that this is the right path to take.

During my first few months as Minister for Foreign Affairs, I visited Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.

I made the visit to Moldova with my close Lithuanian colleague Linas (Linkevicius). The young people we met there see the same future in and with Europe as the young people of Lithuania, Poland and Romania did 20 years ago.

Both Sweden and Lithuania have an important role to play in keeping these European prospects alive.

We must offer a path forward and ensure that the door is open to the countries that want and manage to make it all the way – that meet the requirements, regulations and conditions that apply to EU Member States in the future.

I am therefore very happy to announce that Linas and I will visit Ukraine together later this autumn.

\* \* \*

However, external challenges and commitments are not limited to those in the east, as we are witnessing at an accelerating pace.

Our neighbours in the south also need our full commitment.

The war in Syria is no closer to resolution and the Russian air strikes in Syria risk derailing the UN-led political track. I strongly urge Russia to focus on the political process rather than on military escalation.

The barbaric atrocities of ISIL continue. The fighting in Libya is tearing the country apart. Sexual violence is increasingly used as both a strategic weapon and a source of income.

The human suffering is immense. As a result of these conflicts and other structural challenges in the region, refugees are looking for a way out.

Millions of people are fleeing to neighbouring countries. And many take the route across the Mediterranean or the Western Balkans to the EU.

Of the 60 million refugees worldwide, about one million are expected to seek

refugee in Europe in 2015. The crisis is acute and must be met through a comprehensive and united EU approach to migration.

The solidarity that Robert Schuman spoke about in 1950 is needed today. And perhaps more than ever before.

The European Union is a global actor with a strong commitment to human rights, democracy and rule of law.

The world expects us to respond to the current refugee situation according to our values.

And we should expect nothing less of ourselves. The right of an individual to seek asylum is a human right under international law.

In 2014 alone, Sweden offered asylum to 81 000 people – the highest per capita number in Europe. Since the outbreak of the conflict in Syria, almost 95 000 Syrians have fled to Sweden.

We will continue to do our part, but other Member States must do theirs – in the spirit of European solidarity.

At the same time, we must respect the historic and economic differences between EU countries.

Lack of immigration experience and structures for hosting and integrating refugees is an important aspect in this regard.

But immigration should never be seen as a burden. European countries with declining populations require an influx of workers from other countries. Today, one in six people living in Sweden was born in another country.

Many of the refugees from Syria are well educated. They will be able to join the workforce as soon as they have mastered the basics of the new language.

We Europeans should share our experiences in this current situation.

We need to discuss how to best integrate newcomers from different countries into the workforce and into our communities, how to provide them with opportunities and ensure their equal rights.

But above all, we need to work on two tracks simultaneously.

First, with winter approaching, the lack of resources for basic humanitarian work on the ground must be solved. Secondly, we need to address the underlying factors causing people to flee – be they conflict, oppression or economic vulnerability.

\* \* \*

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to say a few words about global challenges and the role of the United Nations.

In recent years, we have been forced to witness our collective inability to resolve major problems. And I wonder whether the gap between problems and solutions may, in fact, be growing.

Finding a way to reduce this gap must be a priority of Swedish and European foreign policy in the years to come. To succeed, it is especially important to develop our dialogue also with countries outside our own neighbourhood, many of which are making rapid headway.

For this reason, Sweden is now renewing old friendships with countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

We also believe that the UN, which remains the backbone of the international system, must be strengthened. Sweden's candidacy for the Security Council is an expression of our readiness to listen and act with integrity.

And let me be clear on this last point. The Swedish Government sees no contradiction between a firm commitment to EU foreign policy and strong engagement in the UN. On the contrary. The EU needs a strong UN just as the UN benefits from a strong EU.

\* \* \*

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to close with a quote by my colleague and friend, Lithuanian President, Dalia Grybauskaitė.

*“(...) we together joined the European Union, becoming partners in a unified area of freedom, democracy and solidarity. An area founded on*

*respect for human rights and other freedoms. An area that brings down barriers between nations and people – where the challenges of your neighbour are also your challenges. And all of this is built on a strong foundation of solidarity.”*

\* \* \*

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak here today.

I have done so against a serious backdrop.

*“Never so prosperous, so secure, nor so free”* has changed into *“more connected, more contested and more complex”*.

Time will always change, but the foundation of our European Union must not.

As always, it is about solidarity.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs in round table discussion: "United in Combating Human Trafficking"

Published 08 October 2015 Updated 08 October 2015

Round table discussion in connection with the Swedish State Visit to Lithuania, "United in Combating Human Trafficking", Constitutional Hall, Seimas (Lithuanian Parliament), Vilnius, 8 October 2015.

Your Majesty,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to participate in this round-table discussion on an important topic. I represent a feminist government. As a feminist government we put gender equality at the heart of decision-making, in every policy area. Gender equality is an integral part of a modern welfare state and democracy. It is also key component in the pursuit of peace and security.

Gender and trafficking are interconnected at many levels.

Sexual exploitation is the most widespread form of human trafficking in the European Union, and women and girls make up the overwhelming majority of the victims. Trafficking of women and girls is a form of violence against women, rooted in gender inequalities and social structures that we need to acknowledge and address.

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In Sweden, in our national work to counter trafficking we focus on the three Ps:

***Prevention***

***Protection*** of victims

***Prosecution*** of perpetrators.

Governments, in collaboration with civil society, must work to prevent trafficking and provide protection to those who fall victim to it. We need to improve instruments to detect the crime, identify those involved, protect and rehabilitate victims, and prosecute the traffickers.

Trafficking for sexual purposes and prostitution are closely related. In our view, the fight against trafficking for sexual purposes cannot be separated from the fight against prostitution. Where there is a market for prostitution, traffickers can profit from the sexual exploitation of women and girls.

In order to curb demand, Sweden criminalised the purchase of sexual services in 1999. It is a criminal offence to buy sex in Sweden. Sweden does not criminalise the seller of sexual services, because women and girls who are in prostitution or the sex industry are already in a vulnerable position and should not be subject to further stigma and double victimisation.

The sex trade is dehumanising and unacceptable, and this is reflected in the Swedish legal framework. Prohibiting the purchase of sexual services has proven to be an effective tool in the fight against human trafficking for sexual purposes. According to Swedish police and prosecutors, the law has made Sweden a less attractive destination country for traffickers. In addition, the law is believed to have a deterrent effect on demand. The number of men in Sweden who buy sex has dropped significantly, with an estimated decrease of 50 per cent since the introduction of the law.

For us, the fight against prostitution and sexual trafficking forms an important part of gender equality policy. As long as there is a market for prostitution, which in turn opens up opportunities for traffickers, we have failed to respect the human rights of women. Gender inequality makes women and girls vulnerable to traffickers. In order to end trafficking, we must build societies that offer women and men, girls and boys equal opportunities. The response to human trafficking – including the work of law enforcement authorities – must take into account the gendered nature of the

problem. The European Institute for Gender Equality is undoubtedly a relevant actor on these issues and I am looking forward to visiting it later today.

International cooperation is crucial to success in combating trafficking. We need to work together and learn from each other.

Trafficking in persons is a global concern. It is a transboundary multi-billion dollar industry that requires multilateral responses. The UN Office on Drugs and Crimes, UNODC, is mandated to work against Trafficking in Persons. UNODC provides capacity building to member states and helps increase visibility of successful prosecutions and convictions. Moreover, UNICEF works to prevent child trafficking which affects an estimated 1.2 million children each year. The United Nations is a powerful arena for cooperation.

The Task Force against Trafficking within the Council of Baltic Sea States is a good example of international cooperation. The Task Force is working on several projects to counter human trafficking in the Baltic Sea Region through preventive and protective activities. Activities aim at strengthening assistance to victims, promoting cooperation, abolishing gaps in existing approaches and improving legislation. To this end, the Task Force works to facilitate and promote coordination and exchange of knowledge, results and best practices between existing local, regional, national and international initiatives.

We must work together at all levels: nationally and internationally. Sweden and Lithuania must continue the work together. Our countries are already closely linked on this issue, and this has proved successful in our efforts to combat organised trafficking networks. I am convinced that this round-table discussion among our experts will lead to greater knowledge of this modern form of slavery and how we can stop it.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Commemoration of the Seventieth Anniversary of the United Nations

Published 01 October 2015 Updated 01 October 2015

United Nations, New York, 1 October 2015. Please check against delivery.

Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, colleagues,

Events are often referred to as historic. This week, that description rings true.

We have set ourselves a new, universal agenda for sustainable development. We are in the midst of reviewing the peace and security work of the UN. And we are celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations – of our United Nations.

Anniversaries are, as pointed out in the invitation to this debate, an opportunity to both reflect on the past and to look ahead, to both learn from experiences and to think boldly and innovatively about the future.

I would like to limit myself to making three points.

The first one is partnerships. The UN has a unique mandate, scope, presence and resources. Yet, the organization must work with others to achieve sustainable peace and security. Cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations has developed impressively during past years, but there is room for further action. The presence of you, representatives of regional and sub-regional organizations, here today is very important, and I appreciate the perspectives that you have shared with us. We welcome that regional and sub-regional actors are increasingly becoming first responders to a majority

of the crises in Africa.

We need to further institutionalize this cooperation, define burden-sharing, and ensure predictable financing of regional organizations' capacity to respond to conflicts. Strategic partnerships are crucial to ensuring early warning – and, even more importantly, early action.

Partnerships are key also within the UN. We should promote a well-integrated UN family, with a common vision, and an integrated approach to security and development. The joint DPA and UNDP programme on building capacity for conflict prevention is one of many good examples.

Dialogue is needed also with civil society – in our own countries and in conflict areas, to deepen our analysis and explain our actions. By drawing on civil society actors' knowledge and experience, we gain a deeper understanding of local realities, which in turn is a prerequisite for effective UN engagement. I am pleased to see representatives of civil society here today.

Secondly, the women, peace and security agenda. Achieving gender equality and strengthening women's participation in decision-making at all levels represents one of the main outstanding issues of the 21st century. We must secure women's rights and active involvement, or fail to achieve development, peace and security. The global study on resolution 1325 will be a critical contribution. But let us not forget our responsibility as Member States. Sweden is currently reviewing its national action plan, to set priorities and intensify efforts. We are also looking in to ways of strengthening the role of women in mediation – as mediators, but also as representatives of the parties around the negotiating table.

The other two reviews – of peace operations and of the peacebuilding architecture – are also key in strengthening the peace and security agenda of our organization. Together, they form a great opportunity – and responsibility – to adapt our instruments and policies.

This leads me to my third point: a strong, modern and reformed UN, with an effective and responsive Security Council. Sweden would like to see a more effective Council, equipped to meet emerging forms of conflict in an increasingly complex world. We need a Council that reflects the geopolitical realities of today, where Africa, Asia and Latin America are adequately represented. Enhanced consultations with, and transparency in relation to troop and police contributing countries, as well as regional and sub-regional

organizations, not least the African Union, will undoubtedly lead to greater effectiveness and legitimacy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations once wrote “never measure the height of a mountain until you have reached the top. Then you will see how low it was.”

Perhaps these words could serve as inspiration when we face the global challenges ahead of us. We have made great achievements – of which we should be proud. We see fantastic opportunities ahead – which should be seized. But we still also face tremendous challenges – which we must face up to.

The conflicts in 2015 may be more complex and multifaceted than at the time when the UN charter was written. However, changed circumstances do not alter our responsibilities. But it challenges us to adapt our approach and response.

We must make our organization fit for these tasks, and ensure that it reaches its full potential – building on the organizational wisdom of the first 70 years of the United Nations.

Sweden, as one of the largest overall contributors to the UN, wants to do its part. Sweden’s candidacy for a seat on the Security Council for the period of 2017-18 is a concrete manifestation of this readiness and willingness to contribute and to take responsibility for meeting the challenges.

Let me end by thanking the General Assembly and its President for organizing this debate, and for allowing us to take a moment to reflect and commemorate, and to mobilize new energy and commitments.

Most people would probably see it appropriate to slow down by the age of 70. I believe that the opposite holds true for the United Nations. Work needs to be done. Or with Hammarskjöld’s words: there is another mountain top to climb.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs on "Call to Action on Protection from Gender Based Violence"

Published 01 October 2015 Updated 01 October 2015

Swedish US Side Event, UNGA Week, New York, 1 October 2015

Secretary of State John Kerry, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

Transforming the way gender-based violence is addressed in humanitarian emergencies is a challenge which requires our strong, sustained and collective political commitment.

I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to Secretary of State John Kerry and the United States for the dedication and engagement shown as leader of the Call to Action. I am convinced that the Road map, which we are launching here today, will serve as a powerful tool in driving change.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the states and humanitarian agencies who, by joining the Call to Action, have committed themselves to making significant changes to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in conflicts and natural disasters. I truly believe that systematic and coordinated collective action is imperative in order to achieve real progress, both in policy and, most importantly, on the ground.

Gender-based violence is a global structural problem that continues to plague every country on earth, regardless of economic wealth, culture or geographical location, both in times of war and peace. At the global level, it is estimated that one out of three women are subjected to violence during her

lifetime, a completely unacceptable figure.

We know that in conflicts, natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies, the threat of gender-based violence increases.

In my previous capacity as the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict I met regularly with women and children who had been subjected to the most horrendous forms of sexual violence. In warzones, rape was often being systematically employed as a weapon of war. On my first visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo a young woman explained to me that in her country, “a dead rat was worth more than the body of a woman”.

But not only armed conflict leads to increased levels of gender-based violence. As natural disasters tear down the social structures of society and increase vulnerability *especially* women and girls face a heightened risk of exploitation and abuse.

What becomes clear is that despite increased international attention in recent years, adequate measures to prevent and respond to gender-based violence are still not undertaken.

We know that gender-based violence occurs in each and every humanitarian emergency. We also know that it is underreported due to fears of stigma and reprisals. Addressing gender-based violence from the onset of an emergency saves lives and must become an integral part of every humanitarian response. This is the promise and purpose of the Call to Action initiative.

Ladies and gentlemen, gender-based violence can be prevented and stopped.

Immediate preventive actions, such as ensuring that there is sufficient lighting in refugee camps, must be combined with more long-term strategies. We need to address the root causes of gender-based violence. Such an approach includes promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls.

Last week, here in New York, our leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Combatting gender-based violence will be of fundamental importance if we are to reach several of the development goals. For, ladies and gentlemen, let me be clear: there can be no sustainable development and no sustainable peace if women and girls continue to be systematically discriminated, excluded, abused and exploited.

I am pleased to be here today as the incoming leader of the Call to Action. Promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls are critical priorities for the Swedish government. Last year we adopted a Feminist Foreign Policy, which means that a gender perspective is applied to all foreign policy areas. Addressing gender-based violence constitutes an integral part of this policy and we will continue to give this high priority, not least in our humanitarian assistance.

Now is the time to act. Pledges and high-level political commitments on gender-based violence must be translated into funding and concrete actions on the ground. I assure you that Sweden is committed to leading and advancing the Call to Action initiative - by striving to expand the partnership, through strong political advocacy and by supporting the effective implementation of the Road map. We look forward to working with all of you in realising the Call to Action goal.

Thank you.





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the Security Council Ministerial Meeting

Published 30 September 2015 Updated 30 September 2015

New York, 30 September 2015 Check against delivery

Mr President,

Sweden aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I would like to make a few additional remarks in my national capacity.

Let me first thank the Russian Presidency for organising this ministerial meeting on countering the terrorist threat in the Middle East and North Africa.

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Mr President,

Allow me to focus on two issues of particular concern to us.

Firstly, we must intensify our efforts to find political settlements to end the civil war in Syria and the violence in Iraq.

In the case of Syria, it is unacceptable that the conflict is in its fifth year. The Security Council has to take its responsibility in accordance with the UN Charter. This bloodbath must end.

Special Envoy de Mistura deserves our support in his efforts to find a political solution and urgently implement the Geneva Communiqué of 2012.

The Security Council should endorse the establishment of an international

contact group in support of Mr de Mistura's four working groups. I encourage key actors, including the United States, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Iran, to participate. The EU should also be actively involved.

The ultimate goal is a genuine political transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, including the women of Syria, and enables them to determine their own future independently and democratically.

In the fight against ISIL and terrorism, the Syrian regime must contribute by ending its attacks on civilians and committing to a genuine political transition. Let us not forget that the Syrian regime is responsible for the overwhelming part of the atrocities committed in Syria. Atrocities which may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, and which cannot be tolerated by the international community.

In Iraq, military and stabilisation efforts should be underpinned by a political process of national reconciliation and inclusive politics. Prime Minister Abadi has taken bold steps to include the Sunni community and all other groups in the governance of Iraq. Sweden will continue to play an active role in the Coalition against ISIL in Iraq. We are participating in the group on stabilisation – a key to a democratic, stable and unified Iraq. Yesterday my Prime Minister pledged USD 4 million to the UNDP Stabilisation Fund for Iraq. We are a major donor of humanitarian aid. And we are participating in the coalition's military training efforts in Northern Iraq.

Mr President,

Secondly, we need to counter the widespread and systematic violence against women and children. By using girls and women as sex slaves, and rape as a method of warfare, the Syrian regime and terrorist groups such as ISIL have committed flagrant human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law.

This matter is not new to me. When I briefed the Security Council in my previous capacity as the UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflicts, I used to highlight that my visits in the field taught me that that sexual violence was often considered either as something inevitable, unspeakable or as a lesser crime.

And now, the use of sexual violence has been taken to horrific new levels, when sexual violence is not only condoned, but openly commanded as a method of warfare.

This issue should be kept on the agenda of the Security Council, as it is a matter of international peace and security. Sweden welcomes the announcement by the Secretary-General yesterday on the presentation of a comprehensive plan of action on countering violent extremism and terrorism. I urge fellow UN Member States to support Special Representative Bangura's efforts. Sweden is committed to strengthening our support to victims and survivors of sexual violence. There must be accountability for sexual violence and an end to impunity.

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If we look at the broader Middle East, there are also other conflicts – in Libya and Yemen – that require urgent political solutions.

Today we are addressing the immediate threat from ISIL. If we also look beyond, we have to address the broader security challenges of the region. It is necessary to revive the Middle East Peace Process, support good governance, strengthen post-conflict restoration and peacebuilding, as well as tackle climate change and find solutions to water management issues.

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In conclusion, Mr President,

The values of democracy, human rights and equality remain our best defence against terrorism. And they can only be achieved through political settlements based on reconciliation and inclusiveness.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at high-level meeting to commemorate the International Day for the Total elimination of Nuclear Weapons

Published 30 September 2015 Updated 30 September 2015

New York, 30 September 2015 Check against delivery

Chairperson,

Let me start by expressing my sincere thanks to the initiators, conveners and participants of this meeting. Arranging a meeting on the total elimination of nuclear weapons a little less than two months since the 70<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki gives us a special responsibility to bring remembrance into action.

Chairperson,

A few days ago, I participated in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) ministerial conference here at the UN. The CTBT has been an issue close to my heart ever since I campaigned to end nuclear testing in the South Pacific some 20 years ago. I was encouraged by the fact that the voices against testing resounded as strongly in the UN as they did all those years ago in the South Pacific.

And yet a ban on nuclear tests is just the beginning. As we learned 70 years ago, the use of nuclear weapons brings catastrophic destruction to human lives, creation and the environment on a scale that no single country, nor the international community, can hope to address.

Sweden's position is clear: the only real guarantee that these weapons will never be used again is their total elimination.

Chairperson,

Today, around 16 000 nuclear weapons remain, with a destructive power able to undo human civilisation many times over. This is simply unacceptable. We cannot continue to commemorate the victims of nuclear weapons year after year while at the same time accepting that these weapons still remain. We need to do more, much more.

All States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty have committed themselves to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. That commitment has to be brought into practical measures, change on the ground. One avenue ahead is the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons agenda, which has gathered a great deal of support among UN Member States. Sweden would welcome another international conference on this subject; there are still a number of humanitarian aspects of nuclear weapons that merit further study.

Another road forward is the re-establishment of an Open-ended Working Group under the UN General Assembly that can take nuclear disarmament forward in an effective and structured way. Sweden would like the mandate of the OEWG to be to agree on recommendations on concrete legal and practical measures to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. We expect all States in possession of nuclear weapons to participate in the work of an OEWG to push the disarmament agenda forward.

Chairperson,

My country strongly believes in international cooperation. Time and again, great strides forward have been achieved by countries coming together with a unity of purpose. We believe that there is very much a unity of purpose in the international community regarding the subject of today's meeting: the total elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Sweden stands ready to contribute and support solutions that can bring us closer to making this goal a reality.

Thank you Chairperson.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the high-level meeting “Champions for a New Approach to Peacebuilding”

Published 29 September 2015 Updated 29 September 2015

International Peace Institute (IPI), New York, 29 September 2015. Please check against delivery.

Thank you all for coming. From short and hectic meetings to something that is inherently long-term in nature: peacebuilding.

Let me also thank our co-hosts, the International Peace Institute and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation.

In your opening speech yesterday, Mr President of the General Assembly, you noted that “never before has such a large share of humanity enjoyed so good a life, yet never before have we been at greater risk of fundamentally disrupting the basic living conditions on our small globe”. You stressed the linkages between development, peace and security and respect for human rights, and to make progress in each of these areas. Yesterday, unprecedented pledges were made by member states to UN peacekeeping. To quote Ambassador Power’s closing words; “these commitments have the power to transform the enterprise of peacekeeping”.

For peace to endure, peacekeeping needs to be complemented by equally effective peacebuilding. This meeting is aimed at exactly that: to strengthen the UN peacebuilding capacities.

I would like to put forward a call for a more proactive UN with reinforced capacity to respond to conflicts. I want to see a United Nations that puts

sustaining peace back at the core of its business – through ramping up conflict prevention capacity, adopting a holistic approach to peacebuilding and ensuring that all engagement is built on thorough political understanding.

To create such a shift we need political courage and determination. And we need leadership from Member States. Sweden is deeply committed to do its part.

Let me touch briefly on three specific areas, where we need more action:

Firstly, effective implementation of Resolution 1325 is crucial to achieving sustainable results. We know that early investments in inclusive peacebuilding processes that empower women lay a stronger foundation for reconciliation, which in turn contributes to reducing the risk of relapse. Together, we need to ensure that the Women, Peace and Security agenda is placed at the centre of our discussions and mainstreamed into all aspects and phases of UN engagement: analysis, planning, training and implementation.

Secondly, we must acknowledge that the UN is far from the only actor in this field. For Sweden, finding ways to improve cooperation between the UN and regional, and sub-regional, organisations such as the African Union is a priority. This means institutionalizing cooperation, define burden-sharing and ensure predictable financing of regional organization's capacity to respond to conflicts. Such strategic partnerships are crucial to ensuring early warnings – and, even more importantly, early action. We also need smart and inclusive partnerships with civil society. By drawing on these actors' knowledge and experiences we gain a deeper understanding of local realities, which in turn is a prerequisite for effective UN engagement.

Finally, if we are serious about adopting a new approach to peacebuilding, we need to make sure that our allocations of resources are aligned with our rhetoric. We are currently spending billions of dollars on humanitarian aid and peacekeeping, we should therefore invest upfront in conflict prevention. The review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, as well as the report of the High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, put forward innovative suggestions on financing, which we look forward to discussing with all of you over the coming months. We also need do better in demonstrating the results of our efforts by conveying the success stories, where peace was maintained and an escalation of violence was averted. The Peacebuilding Fund has demonstrated its unique added value for early, rapid and flexible support to peacebuilding. As a significant donor to the Fund we urge other to step in to ensure that a critical shortfall can be averted.

As the current chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Sweden will do its utmost to make sure that the commission capitalizes on this momentum.

We also need to relate to other initiatives. The International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, is one important platform for promoting sustainable peace in fragile societies.

Thank you.





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the Article XIV Conference

Published 29 September 2015 Updated 29 September 2015

Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the Article XIV Conference, United Nations, New York. 29 September 2015. Check against delivery.

Chairpersons,

Let me start by wishing Japan and Kazakhstan every success for their two-year term as Article XIV coordinators, and by thanking the Secretary-General for convening this important conference.

Chairpersons,

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is close to my heart. Twenty years ago, when I was Minister for Cultural Affairs, I campaigned actively to end nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

I was therefore particularly moved by the statement at this year's NPT Review Conference by my colleague Tony deBrum from the Marshall Islands. As a nine-year old, sitting on his father's fishing boat, he saw the sky turn red and felt the shock wave when the 1954 Castle Bravo test detonated at Bikini Atoll, with a yield of 15 megatons. And he was 200 miles from ground zero.

The effects on humans and nature of the over 2000 nuclear tests carried out over 50 years are severe. Test sites remain uninhabitable for humans, and land and pristine coral reefs have been destroyed. These effects serve as a stark reminder of the unacceptable and incalculable humanitarian and

environmental consequences that would result if nuclear weapons were ever used again. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty gives us hope that such a horrific scenario will not be repeated.

Nuclear disarmament remains a top priority of my Government. One of my first actions as Minister for Foreign Affairs was to add Sweden to the countries that support the Humanitarian Initiative. Sweden's strong support for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains steadfast. Indeed, the entire European Union is united behind this goal, which would be an important milestone on the path to achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons. And it is a step to which all States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty are committed.

Sweden's support for the CTBT was expressed through our hosting of the first substantive meeting of the CTBTO Group of Eminent Persons (GEM) last year. Among the participants were Dr Lassina Zerbo, Dr Hans Blix and High Representative Federica Mogherini, who will speak later today. In terms of technical support, the Swedish Defence Research Agency FOI recently began the development of a third generation of the SAUNA system for noble gas detection. We are pleased that the SAUNA system has proven its worth, most recently at the IFE on-site inspection exercise in Jordan. It is being installed at radionuclide stations around the world as part of the International Monitoring System.

Chairpersons,

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty gives us hope that my dream from all those years ago, and our shared vision of a more humane world in which nuclear testing remains a thing of the past, may come true. Today, we renew our call on all States that have not yet done so, in particular the eight remaining Annex 2 countries, to join us in realising that vision.

Thank you Chairpersons.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the UN High-level event about South Sudan

Published 29 September 2015 Updated 29 September 2015

## Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström at the UN High-level event about South Sudan, on September 29.

Mr President, Mr Secretary General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The people of South Sudan have seen too much hardship and struggle for so young a nation. They deserve not only an end to the civil war, but a secure, peaceful and prosperous future, with equal and sustainable development benefitting all.

The meeting today is very timely, since it gives us an opportunity to welcome the signing of the new peace agreement and allows us to commend this step by the country's leaders. We now enter a critical phase where the agreement needs to be implemented in good faith and without delay. This will require hard work and commitment by all.

The mediators and partners of South Sudan deserve full recognition and gratitude of the international community. The efforts of neighbouring countries, the African Union, and in particular IGAD and its member states, have been key in bringing about this agreement. We must give these efforts our full support and I want to assure you that Sweden will continue to stand by the people of South Sudan.

As a priority, the signatories must do all in their power to ensure that the ceasefire holds. All levels of society and all ethnic groups must be involved in the implementation. This concerns not least women, who are important actors and agents of change. There needs to be active involvement and

participation of both women and men in formal as well as informal processes. Sustainable development, peace and security can never be achieved if half the population is excluded.

The successful implementation of the agreement also depends on ending impunity, again with a particular focus on violence against women.

Let us not lose sight of the still ongoing humanitarian crisis. Sweden was the fourth largest bilateral donor of humanitarian aid to South Sudan in 2014, with a total contribution of approximately 62 million US dollars. We continue to follow the situation closely, and have disbursed 22 million dollars so far this year.

Still, fragile as the situation is, we need to look ahead and bridge humanitarian aid with long term development. Sweden has therefore adopted a strategy for development cooperation with South Sudan to help rebuild critical basic institutions, with a particular focus on the health sector.

But, in our support, we also need to find ways to strengthen the cooperation between the UN and the African Union. Synergies need to be further developed in order to effectively address all aspects of conflict. We need to enhance regional capacities, including with adequate resourcing. Something we have made a main priority in our chairmanship of the UN Peacebuilding Commission.

In concluding, I would like to reiterate Sweden's commitment to work with South Sudan to help improve the quality of life of its people – fulfilling the great expectations that we all held at independence. Echoing President Kiir's conclusion in his Address to the Nation on 15 September: "Remember that it is our collective responsibility and love of our country that will make us succeed and feel respected always as 'One People, One Nation'."

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström in the Arctic conference in Alaska

Published 31 August 2015 Updated 02 September 2015

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström  
at the GLACIER Conference in Anchorage, Alaska on  
August 30-31, 2015.

**Dear colleagues and friends,**

The views you see on arriving in Anchorage are stunning.

In northern Sweden we have a suitable expression: “*Unnecessarily beautiful*”.

Looking at this landscape, I came to think of the late Rolf Edberg, a Swedish author and politician. Describing the role of the atmosphere, he wrote:

*“Yonder, the blue mountains. Below them, a veil brushed across the continents, so thin that not even the finest brush could trace its like on any globe. But this veil is the precondition and home of all we understand by the concept of organic life”.*

\* \* \*

I would like to say a few words about science and climate change, then about the Arctic, and finally about political priorities.

\* \* \*

As we are speaking, a joint US-Swedish polar expedition is exploring the retreating Peterman Glacier in Greenland. It is led by the icebreaker Oden.

Last year a US-Russian-Swedish research expedition – also led by Oden – travelled along the Russian Arctic coastline, all the way to Alaska and back.

These are fine demonstrations of Arctic cooperation, securing invaluable scientific data and observations, fundamentally necessary for international climate work.

And science is clear: the main cause of climate change is our emissions of carbon dioxide. We are already feeling the consequences.

Carbon dioxide emissions also lead to ocean acidification – a fact we sometimes overlook. Action to reduce emissions is thus the backbone of any climate change mitigation strategy.

The year 2015 *is* crucial. We, the members and observers of the Arctic Council, have a special responsibility to push for a ground-breaking outcome in Paris.

To succeed, we need to secure trust between rich and poor nations.

Our deliberations today have one overriding goal: to galvanise our efforts in this direction. Thank you, Secretary Kerry and your super-Arctic team, for inviting us.

Let me also thank president Obama for his leadership in combating climate change during this critical year.

\* \* \*

In Sweden, the Arctic is a region of the future.

Sustainable green mining and forest industry aside, the northern part of our country is also about space industry, research, advanced car testing...

Facebook recently set up a 28 000 square metre server facility outside the city of Luleå. The reasons were cool weather, a secure supply of renewable energy, and state-of-the-art broadband connections.

Looking at the Arctic as a whole, it truly is an irreplaceable asset of local, regional and global importance.

It is also one of the fastest changing regions of our planet.

It is a region where we can literally hear and watch the melting ice and snow with our own ears and eyes.

And it is a region first and foremost of people. Talking about climate change, the Sami people are the first in our country to notice its effects.

Theirs is an experience shared by indigenous people across the Arctic.

As elected leaders, it is our duty to act.

We need a resilient Arctic because it gives us a resilient planet.

So let me describe the four pillars underpinning Sweden's Arctic Policy.

### **1: Strengthening climate work**

Since a large proportion of the global emissions of greenhouse gases comes from the Arctic states, we have a special responsibility.

While welcoming the Council's agreement on soot and methane, Sweden would like to see a *wider scope* and *further action* within the Council when it comes to climate and renewable energy.

### **2: Providing legal protection for sensitive nature**

In particular the marine environment – opening up as the ice melts – needs protection.

Sweden is promoting the idea of a network of protected areas.

We welcome a framework for a Pan-American Network of Marine Protected Areas and support the American initiatives for a Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation (TFAMC).

Nationally, we are increasing financial support for protection of our own Arctic areas.

### **3: Arctic oil and gas exploitation**

Dear friends,

If we are to end up as far below the two-degree limit as possible, a large part of the world's fossil energy reserves should be left in the ground.

This is a scientific fact, and we all know it.

We need robust regulations, ensuring the highest possible level of security of exploitation.

To get permission for operations, oil and gas companies should take full responsibility for any costs related to a possible accident.

The vision is fossil-free societies.

### **4: Protection against overfishing**

We welcome an inclusive process leading to robust protection of the central Arctic Ocean from unregulated fishing.

The recent initiative of the Arctic coastal states in this regard is timely.

\* \* \*

**Dear friends,**

These four pillars have a common thread: resilience.

Resilience provides us with the capacity to deal with change while continuing to develop.

To respond, adapt, and transform in situations of abrupt change.

We see an increasing risk of large-scale threshold effects in the fast-changing Arctic.



But we still need to understand the nature of these critical thresholds much better.

To have an impact, adaptation must be mainstreamed into our policies, plans and programmes.

I am therefore very pleased that the US joined us to co-chair an important Swedish initiative in the Arctic Council: the *Arctic Resilience Assessment* led by Professor Johan Rockström.

We will continue to prioritise this work so that the Council can take decisions at the 2017 Ministerial.

But we will also continue these discussions with Professor Rockström himself, as I have the honour to introduce him to you all in a moment.

If Alaska is *unnecessarily beautiful*, I hope you will find Professor Rockström *necessarily educational* about the challenges we face.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the Sciences Po joint graduation ceremony for the Paris School of International Affairs (PISA) and the Master in European Affairs Class of 2015, Paris

Published 06 July 2015 Updated 06 July 2015

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the Sciences Po joint graduation ceremony for the Paris School of International Affairs (PISA) and the Master in European Affairs Class of 2015, 2 July, UNESCO's headquarters, Paris. Check agains delivery.

**Graduates and faculty, parents and relatives, partners and friends,**

It is an honour to say the following words: *Congratulations to the class of 2015!*

I wish I could say that preparing this speech reminded me of how I wrote papers at university.

You start when the deadline is only 48 hours away.

But first there's a party you have to go to.

It's a great party and it goes on a little longer than most parents here would like to know about. You get into very deep and meaningful discussions. You get close to solving all the world's problems.

So you have to sleep in the next day. And when you finally get up, you have to clear the dirty dishes and old copies of *The Economist* off your desk.

You open your internet browser, your books, your energy drinks. The paper actually turns out well, and life rolls on.

The problem with this analogy is not the parties, the discussions or the desperate attempt to meet deadlines. I have all that at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Instead, it is that one of the biggest regrets of my life is that I never went to university. I have never experienced the excitement you feel today.

I'm the first to admit that my career has gone well anyway. After many years in politics, I have been awarded honorary doctorates by four universities.

I have been chair of the board of one of the most prestigious universities in Sweden.

I am the mother of two wonderful sons who know everything about writing term papers at the last minute.

And thanks to your kind invitation, my life now also includes a graduation ceremony in Paris for students from over 100 different countries.

**So, dear class of 2015,**

It's an honour to share a few experiences with you, right before you step out into the life that awaits you beyond the doors of this hall.

Since Sciences Po was established in 1872, many of its students have graduated in times of peace and progress. Others have graduated in difficult times. You will start your careers at a time when the state of global affairs is challenging, though with some important and positive exceptions.

The act of aggression that Russia has committed against Ukraine is the greatest challenge to European peace and security since the end of the Cold War.

Our humanitarian systems are overburdened by the world's forty armed conflicts, of which eleven are full-scale wars.

Refugee flows are reaching the levels seen during the Second World War.

Terrorist attacks call for continued efforts to fight terrorism, here in France and around the world.

And climate change poses a threat to our very existence.

But at the same time, extreme poverty and infant mortality are declining. Technology is advancing. Our interdependence is growing.

My job is to use these opportunities to tackle the challenges.

However, I came here to tell you that although I am a Minister for Foreign Affairs, you are the future VIPs – the Very Important People.

Thanks to your extremely hard work, you are graduating from a university that is ranked among the best in the world in politics and international studies.

The list of degrees awarded here today resembles an agenda at my meetings in the EU Foreign Affairs Council: international security, energy, human rights, development – to give a few examples.

And I'm perfectly confident when I say that many of you will be future leaders of governments, global organisations and companies.

My French colleague in the Foreign Affairs Council, Laurent Fabius, is a graduate of Sciences Po, of course.

And to be sure, Monsieur Fabius and I still have a lot of work to do. But my point is that the responsibility will gradually move to your shoulders.

Therefore, I would now like to do my duty as a graduation speaker: it's time for three pieces of personal advice.

**First: Remember that life is more than self-service.**

I understand that a vast majority of you has already gotten a job before graduation. That must make a lot of parents happy. But even when success and decent pay checks arrive, don't forget the value of doing something for

someone else.

If you would like to be remembered for who you are rather than for the title on your business card, do something that benefits others.

After a decade as a European Commissioner, I moved to New York and started working for the United Nations. Sounds like a dream, of course.

But the combination of a huge city and a huge bureaucracy made me sometimes feel very small. I started volunteering at a soup kitchen, where we distributed food packages to elderly citizens.

When you feel that you are losing sight of who you are, put yourself in a situation where you are *not* the centre of attention. Because life is more than just self-service.

**My second piece of advice is this: Unlock the frozen sea within you**

Every evening when I leave the Ministry, my staff gives me a thick binder full of things to read.

These documents are important, but not always inspiring. So I have always made a point of alternating the binders with novels, short stories and poetry.

Franz Kafka puts it brilliantly: “*A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us*”.

Whatever your jobs demand in the future, I am certain that you will perform better if you continue to feed your imagination, your sensitivity, your knowledge, your language skills, and your ability to both persuade and understand others.

And remember that just a few words can stimulate and inspire your imagination – this was true even before Twitter.

When it comes to Ernest Hemingway, we can never be 100 per cent sure that a story is true. But as many of you know, Hemingway is said to be the author of the following six-word story:

*“For sale: baby shoes, never worn.”*

These six words can send your thoughts flying in many directions. My experience is that an unexpected few words, like unwelcome events, can

change your whole world very quickly.

Then people will look at you as a future leader, expecting *you* to act. **This leads me to my third piece of advice:**

**Let your values be your backbone.**

I have lived long enough to understand that courageous people have something in common.

Their values are their compass, showing right from wrong.

I have also lived long enough to know that being anxious, or even afraid, can make things difficult when choosing between the right way and the easy way.

But strong values will help you.

So let me tell you about some of my values and what I believe in.

**I believe that women's rights are human rights.** Gender equality is among the great unfinished business of our century.

With ISIL selling naked women and girls at actual slave markets, it is obvious that sexual violence is a weapon of terror and a source of income that is used worldwide.

Yet of the 585 peace agreements signed since 1990, only 17 mention this type of crime. Of 300 ceasefire agreements, only 6 consider that sexual violence entails a breach of the agreement.

Research shows that women's participation in peace processes increases the likelihood of achieving sustainable peace and security.

This means that everyone benefits from the feminist foreign policy that the Swedish Government is pursuing.

**I believe in solidarity across borders.** Because if you live on a planet with billions of people, it doesn't matter which direction you choose to take.

The world is round. You will inevitably meet fellow citizens, and eventually you will be back where you started. We share a common destiny. We must act for the common good – not just for ourselves.

And if you need an example, I will answer with science: Last year the world was warmer than at any time since records began in 1880.

And don't believe the populist and xenophobic groups claiming that Europe's problems are caused by immigration.

Our industries are not moving to low-income countries in Southeast Asia because of refugees fleeing the wars in the Middle East.

Cuts to the welfare state are not made by people fleeing economic hardship in Africa.

And your local post office did not disappear because of the arrival of unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan.

**Instead, I believe in the primacy of politics.** The levels of poverty that we once had in Europe were not a law of nature.

Decent lives, universal suffrage and eight-hour working days were goals that could be achieved.

We are not helpless victims just because globalisation has made national politics more difficult for the time being.

It's up to us to make the European Union stronger, to make the global world order better, and to build more equal, tolerant and sustainable societies.

**Dear class of 2015,**

Welcome to the best years of your lives!

On the other side of the doors to this hall, there is a world waiting for new leadership and strong values.

If you go into politics, remember that values are more important than opinion polls.

If you go into business, remember that values are more important than profits.

Work hard. Look after others. Read books. Make your values your backbone.

And fantastic things will happen.

Thank you.





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs

Published 09 June 2015 Updated 09 June 2015

Check against delivery.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

*Never so prosperous, so secure, nor so free.*

So begins the foreign policy strategy adopted by the European Union just over a decade ago. The strategy is imbued with the confidence we all felt then.

Peace seemed self-evident in our part of the world. Bloodshed on the battlefield had been replaced by patience at the negotiating table. The scars of Europe's division were healing. European cooperation was growing strong and expanding eastward.

European development was closely linked to global progress. The world's total GDP doubled between 2000 and 2013. We achieved the goal of halving the proportion of the world's population living in extreme poverty.

At the same time, technological developments placed a mobile phone in the hands of half of the world's population. For a time, Western democracy emerged as the natural social model of the future and there was talk of the end of history.

The description of our European continent never having been “so prosperous, so secure, nor so free” was, at that time, a fitting one.

But we are now living in times of greater uncertainty, in which these words ring hollow.

For although Sweden remains one of the most free, secure and prosperous countries in the world, the world – including Sweden – has entered a more uncertain time.

It is visible in occasionally uneven European cooperation.

It is visible in our neighbourhood, with Russian aggression in Ukraine and war, terrorism and refugee disasters in Europe's southern neighbourhood.

And it is visible globally, where deadlocks in our common institutions sometimes occur. Our humanitarian systems are overburdened by the world's forty armed conflicts, of which eleven are full-scale wars. Refugee flows are reaching the levels seen during the Second World War. In 2014 more than 100 million people needed humanitarian assistance. More than 50 million were forced to flee their homes. Inequalities within and between countries are increasing.

It is against this backdrop that the Government has to shape its foreign policy. This is why I am now going to talk about the challenges we have to tackle together. I will begin with the EU, continue with the EU's neighbourhood and conclude with the global challenges.

\* \* \*

Our first challenge concerns developments within the European Union.

The economic crisis has been followed by political tensions, both within Member States and within the framework of the EU as a whole.

We need to regain a firm forward course, with cohesion, solidarity and a new dynamic leading us towards the goals of peace and prosperity that are to be at the heart of our Union.

As you know, Sweden aims to have the EU's lowest unemployment rate by 2020.

And in all EU Member States it would, of course, be preferable for more citizens to find a job that offers decent working conditions. Our common goal must be lower unemployment, decent working conditions, higher growth and a better political climate in which people's frustration is not exploited, and populism and short-sightedness no longer triumph.

European countries need to regain their self-confidence, because we need

strong European cooperation. Cooperation for a Europe that is competitive. For a gender-equal and social Europe that also garners respect for its ambitious environment, energy and climate policy.

Now as before, this cooperation must be open to new members. And it must also be the basis for a strong common European foreign policy.

The new European Security Strategy must therefore build on sound analysis of changes in the rest of the world and changes to the EU's relative strength, internally and externally. The Strategy is due to be completed next year and will serve as a good guide for the 28 Member States in shaping how the EU should best relate to the rest of the world.

\* \* \*

EU cooperation – not least in the wake of the financial crisis – does pose several significant challenges.

But today – 20 years on from our national referendum – I believe that most Swedes feel that the EU is fundamentally positive and that Sweden must naturally be a member. The young people who are now finishing upper secondary school were born citizens of the European Union. European cooperation has finally become a matter of course.

Against this backdrop, I feel some unease about the European project increasingly being called into question in some parts of the EU, and about much of what this cooperation has given us being forgotten or taken for granted.

The Government has a clear conviction: we want a strong Sweden in a strong EU.

And, I might add, we therefore want all of the countries that are currently members of this Union to remain members.

\* \* \*

Our second challenge is the European neighbourhood – our neighbourhood.

It has been our ambition to contribute to peace, freedom and stability. But we are now forced to deal with serious crises on several fronts.

I am deeply concerned about developments in Russia.

The act of aggression that Russia has committed against Ukraine is the greatest challenge to European peace and security since the end of the Cold War.

First Russia's occupation and illegal annexation of Crimea were completed. Then we saw how the Russian aggression continued through support to separatists in eastern Ukraine. And finally, we saw how Russia did not hesitate to send advanced Russian military units across the border to support the separatists. All of this accompanied by Putin's propaganda machine, which is at full throttle.

The fundamental rules that we have together agreed must apply to European peace and security must also apply to Moscow, now and in the future.

Sending your soldiers into other countries is not permitted.

Taking other countries' territory is not permitted.

And the right of other countries to determine their own futures must be respected.

We will therefore insist on the full implementation of the Minsk agreements: on the withdrawal of all Russian troops, on the return of Crimea and on the re-establishment of Ukraine's territorial integrity.

Geopolitical spectres have no place in modern Europe.

Sweden will, if necessary, continue to hinder, condemn and make more costly any form of Russian aggression. And we will remain one of the most ambitious countries in our efforts to help Ukraine succeed.

At the same time, we must maintain both our bilateral relations and the EU's contacts with Russia, which remains our, and the EU's, largest neighbour.

We have to talk to one another and cooperate where possible. The many contacts between Russian and Swedish society – in the research community, between counties and municipalities, between organisations – are hugely valuable. A critical dialogue is essential between neighbours.

\* \* \*

To the east, we also have the Eastern Partnership countries. We will give our full support to those who wish to pursue the path of European reforms and

European integration.

At the recent summit in Riga, both the EU and the six partner countries reaffirmed their support for this joint project.

It will not be easy, but I am convinced that this is the right path to take.

During my first few months as Minister for Foreign Affairs, I visited Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. The young people I met there see the same future in and with Europe as the young people of Estonia, Poland and Romania did 20 years ago.

Sweden has an important role to play in keeping these European prospects alive.

We must offer a path forward and ensure that the door can be opened for the countries that want and manage to make it all the way – that meet the requirements, regulations and conditions that apply to EU Member States.

Our support for the Eastern Partnership is a matter of these countries' right to choose their own path and their own future.

\* \* \*

We are also very strongly committed to our neighbours in the south. We are progressively strengthening and emphasising this, for example through the European Neighbourhood Policy and in our own relations with these countries.

Here we see countries such as Tunisia that are implementing reforms, holding democratic elections and seeking cooperation. They deserve our full support.

But there are also enormous problems in the region.

The civil war in Syria is no closer to a resolution. The barbaric atrocities of ISIL continue. The fighting in Libya is tearing the country apart.

The human suffering is enormous. As a result of these conflicts, and all of the structural challenges the region is facing, there are also refugees looking for a way out. They are fleeing to neighbouring countries but also to Europe.

Some of these refugees take the route across the Mediterranean. They make

their way to Europe with the help of refugee smugglers who time and again place hundreds of human lives in peril while making money off the desperation of fellow human beings.

And far too often, we have been forced to witness the dreams of the refugees and the ruthlessness of the human smugglers ending in unspeakable disasters at sea.

Sadly, there are no simple solutions to this complex problem.

Nonetheless, we must act. The Mediterranean must not become a burial ground for people who flee. We must help save lives.

What we need is concerted European action, in close cooperation with the relevant countries and international organisations.

Above all, we must do more to get at the underlying factors causing people to flee, whether conflict, oppression or economic vulnerability.

We must combat the smuggling networks. Our action against the smugglers must be undertaken within the framework of international law, and clearly observe human rights and international humanitarian law.

We must also push for more legal channels into the EU. Asylum law must be upheld while, at the same time, internal EU solidarity must be strengthened and the division of responsibility made clearer. More countries must do more as the EU takes joint responsibility.

Concerted action is also needed to manage the conflicts in the region.

Sweden, like other EU Member States, is making a considerable contribution to the coalition against ISIL. We are taking humanitarian action and, following the approval granted in the Riksdag last week, we are now also sending military training personnel to Iraq.

We are also contributing extensive humanitarian assistance and aid in other parts of the region. But fundamentally, it is the political tensions that must be tackled.

We are therefore supporting the mediation efforts under the leadership of the UN in Syria and Libya. We want to see a functioning and inclusive Iraq.

We also want to see renewed talks between Israel and Palestine. Sweden's

recognition of Palestine also places a responsibility on us. We want to support a political process for lasting peace. We want to strengthen EU engagement and we will work tirelessly in the EU and the UN to help ensure that negotiations get under way and that they are concluded equitably and as quickly as possible.

The EU can do much more. The United States and engaged countries in the region must also push for progress.

We want to support lasting peace, based on a two-state solution and the 1967 borders. This is the only way to guarantee real peace and security for the people of the region.

An end to the occupation and the implementation of a just solution could also influence developments throughout the Middle East region. The lack of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is currently used as a recruitment tool by ISIL. This must stop.

At the same time, the humanitarian needs and the situation in Gaza are desperate. Sweden's bilateral development aid to Palestine will therefore increase to SEK 1.5 billion over the coming five-year period. Naturally, Sweden places demands in the implementation of its aid, which has an underlying strategy with three main areas: democracy, environment and private sector development.

\* \* \*

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our third challenge is global.

The international community is not currently living up to its responsibilities for peace and security.

In recent years we have been forced to witness our collective inability to resolve major problems. And I wonder whether the gap between problems and solutions may, in fact, be growing.

Finding a way to reduce this gap must be a priority of Swedish and European foreign policy in the years to come. To succeed, it is especially important to also develop our dialogue with countries outside our own neighbourhood, many of which are making rapid headway.

For this reason, we are now renewing old friendships with countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia. During my trips to countries such as Mozambique, Colombia and Indonesia I have encountered respect and expectation. Respect for what we stand for, and expectation of cooperation to make the most of our common opportunities and tackle our common challenges. I will be continuing this work at the end of this week, when I attend the African Union Summit in South Africa.

Meanwhile, China, like India – whose President has just paid a State Visit to Sweden – has an increasingly important role and increasingly important responsibilities.

Together this year, we must also work to secure a new, strong climate agreement in Paris and new global development goals. We might be the last generation that can fight climate change, and the first that can wipe out extreme poverty.

Together we will pursue international disarmament and non-proliferation, despite the failure of the recent NPT conference. Indeed, this is precisely why we must highlight and address the nuclear threat together with others.

Together we will defend democracy, international law and human rights.

And together we need to tackle a global refugee problem of which the disasters in the Mediterranean are just one example.

*“The system is broken,”* said the UN High Commissioner for Refugees on a visit to Stockholm. The system has broken down. The funds are inadequate. The needs are too great. We are hardly likely to see any clearer warning signs of the state of the world.

Our collective inability to resolve the world’s conflicts is leading to severe and needless suffering. It is also leading to our resources having to be used to alleviate suffering rather than to build for the future.

We must therefore strengthen the United Nations, which remains the backbone of the international system.

Our candidacy for the Security Council is an expression of our readiness to take responsibility.

Our outlook is not at all uncritical. In turbulent times we need global solidarity more than ever, and it is for this very reason that we must do what



we can to ensure that the UN becomes better at tackling global challenges, security issues, climate threats and inequality. Ultimately, it is of course up to the Member States, and particularly the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

We would, for example, like to see the Security Council put an end to the carnage in Syria, act decisively to safeguard Ukraine's territorial integrity and establish a framework for renewed talks between Israel and Palestine. We also believe that a more legitimate and effective Security Council requires more adequate representation from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

But we are convinced that the way forward is not to coolly distance ourselves, but rather to increase our engagement. We, and other countries, must do what we can to ensure that the United Nations functions as effectively as possible. This ambition can be summed up in the words of Dag Hammarskjöld:

*“The UN was not created to take humanity to heaven, but to save it from hell.”*

\* \* \*

In recent times, there have been more frequent discussions in our country on security and defence policy. These have taken place against a backdrop of changes in the international situation following the Russian aggression against Ukraine, and increased tensions also in our immediate neighbourhood.

It is very important that serious issues concerning peace and security are handled prudently and with broad support in the Riksdag. It therefore sent a positive signal – including to the rest of the world – when five Riksdag parties representing more than 70 per cent of the Swedish electorate recently agreed on the direction of future defence policy.

Sweden is not a member of any military alliance. With broad support in the Riksdag, we are also strengthening our various forms of regional and international defence cooperation. A modern Swedish security policy is built on cooperation in the EU and on greater cooperation with several partners on a broad front: with Finland and the other Nordic countries, in the Baltic Sea region, in the OSCE and in the UN. The Government also wants to deepen our cooperation with NATO within the framework of our partnership. A strong transatlantic link is of vital importance to Europe's

security.

This is all good and important. And it underlines the fact that we must remember that foreign policy is the primary line of defence.

All of the things I have talked about – our internal EU cooperation, our efforts to support our neighbours, global cooperation – are ultimately also about our Swedish security.

Our means of stopping the Russian aggression are primarily political and economic, not military. Probably the best way of preventing provocative Russian conduct on and over the Baltic Sea is to curb Russian advances in Ukraine.

Sweden's security policy is based on a broad perception of security. Respect for fundamental values such as democracy, rule of law and human rights and freedoms is directly linked to international security, and is the basis of the European security order.

Threats that cannot be met with military means must also be dealt with. With this, I mean everything from international terrorism and cyber threats to pandemics and the heavy, complex threat of climate change. As is widely known, the Government intends to produce a national security strategy to identify goals and means.

\* \* \*

Security threats in the globalised society are so much broader and more multifaceted than they were just a few decades ago. So how should Sweden act in such a landscape? My response is that we must show leadership and take responsibility.

Naturally, on our own we cannot manage all the challenges we are now facing.

But I want everyone to know that Sweden is doing its part, and more, whether at national level, as a member of the EU, or as one of 193 members of the United Nations.

We will demonstrate this by continuing our generous reception of refugees, through our extensive aid, our support to climate action, and through our readiness to send Swedish personnel to peace operations, primarily under the leadership of the UN and the EU, but also together with others.

And I am proud of the Swedes serving abroad, whether in Timbuktu, Donetsk or Mazar-e-Sharif.

\* \* \*

I want Sweden to use its voice.

There are occasions when we must dare to speak up when others are silent. But 'Alone we are strong' has never been a social democratic principle.

Thus our ambition is that our voice will join with others so that it will be heard more clearly.

We will work closely with our Nordic and Baltic neighbours.

We will be a driving force for a clear and united European foreign policy.

We will build alliances with countries throughout the world to pursue important issues.

And we will restore Sweden's role in the United Nations precisely so that we can work with other countries for gender equality and equality in general, disarmament, conflict resolution, decent working conditions and the many other global issues that require solutions if the state of the world is to improve.

Let me be clear on this last point. This Government sees no contradiction between a firm commitment to EU foreign policy and strong engagement in the UN. On the contrary. The EU needs a strong UN just as the UN benefits from a strong EU.

\* \* \*

Ladies and gentlemen,

We will stand up for our values.

Sweden should be associated with a principled defence of human rights and democracy. We seek a world in which everyone's rights are respected. We will stand up for freedom of expression and free speech. We will protect all rights: political, civil, economic, social and cultural.

We will dare to influence other countries, for example in work on the great

unfinished business of the new millennium: human rights are women's rights. This is a dimension that I want to introduce into the traditionally male-dominated foreign and security policy domain.

This is why I have said that a feminist foreign policy will focus on women's rights and representation, and on increasing women's access to social resources.

I recently met with Zainab Hawa Bangura, my successor as the UN's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. She spoke about systematic prostitution, forced abortions and human trafficking perpetrated by ISIL, and about women being forced to undergo surgery after being raped. They are then given a piece of paper certifying that their virginity is intact.

The fact that ISIL sells naked women in actual slave markets makes it obvious that sexual violence is a weapon, a strategy and a source of income that is used worldwide.

However, of the 585 peace agreements that have been signed since 1990, only 17 mention this type of crime. Of 300 ceasefire agreements, only 6 consider that sexual violence means that the agreement has been broken.

Research shows that women's participation in peace processes increases the likelihood of achieving sustainable peace and long-term security. This means that everyone benefits from a feminist foreign policy.

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Ladies and gentlemen,

*More connected, more contested and more complex.* This is how the world is described in the first draft of the EU's new foreign policy strategy.

The tone differs from the corresponding strategy of just over a decade ago. *Never so prosperous, so secure, nor so free* was the wording then.

For Sweden to be able to operate in this new and complex world and assert our interests and our values, we need a broad consensus in our country.

This is why I have said that our foreign policy must have public support and must be discussed throughout Sweden, far beyond the walls of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and my office there.

And this is why I thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. About a world that is becoming more connected, more contested and more complex. Where Sweden is increasingly becoming part of the world, and the world increasingly a part of Sweden.

Let us continue the conversation.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Uppsala University

Published 03 June 2015 Updated 03 June 2015

## Uppsala University, 2 June 2015 Check against delivery

Honourable President,

Your Royal Highnesses,

Vice-Chancellor, Rectrix Magnifica,

Excellencies, friends and students,

It is a privilege and a pleasure for me to introduce the Honourable President of India, Mr Pranab Mukherjee. And it is particularly gratifying to do so here in Uppsala, at the University.

Among the many factors that draw our two countries together are our cooperation on science, research and technology, and the meetings of students, minds and ideas. During this historic State Visit – the first ever from India – we have deepened our relations in these and numerous other areas, such as trade and people-to-people contacts, renewable energy, sustainable development and health. A Memorandum of Understanding on Sustainable Urban Development has been signed, as have various agreements between universities.

Uppsala has been the host and home to some of the greatest Indian and Swedish voices of peace and global dialogue. Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore is, as we have heard, one of them. He embraced humanism and universalism. He was an idealist, an internationalist and an environmentalist. He was also, as you know, the first non-European to receive the Award.

During his first visit to Sweden, in 1921, he was guided around Uppsala by Archbishop Söderlund, who, less than a decade later, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Alva Myrdal, another Nobel Laureate and the first Swedish

ambassador to India, called Uppsala home, and former UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld had this University as his Alma Mater. As we keep our eyes on the road ahead, I believe we should also once in a while glance back, to learn from these women and men who preceded us.

Mr President, you have had a long and outstanding career in Indian and global political affairs representing the people of India, the world's largest democracy. I have learned that you draw strength and inspiration from the great Indian civilization and way of life, and from the fundamental principles and ideas about peaceful coexistence between humans.

I will soon leave the floor to you, Mr President, to speak to us about *Tagore and Ghandi – do they have contemporary relevance for global peace?* Before doing so, I would like to briefly address three areas, to which I believe India and Sweden share a commitment. They all centre around the topic of your speech, that of global peace.

First, global peace calls for global dialogue.

The world knows India as a strong advocate of global collaboration within the framework of the United Nations. Our two countries have a steadfast confidence in multilateralism, and in the belief that the nations of the world can meet collective challenges only by working together.

In this increasingly uncertain world, effective multilateralism – with the UN at its core – is perhaps of greater importance than ever before.

Tagore spoke about the necessity to see the world as one. Globalisation offers great opportunities. It brings individuals and nations closer together. People trade and travel, they exchange ideas and information. But the challenges have also become more complex: climate change, pandemics, food insecurity, intolerance and violent extremism.

These changes are putting the UN system to the test. Sweden will continue to take an active part in the continuous process of reforming the UN, to ensure that it is fit for purpose. This includes the Security Council. For the Council to be more legitimate and effective, a more adequate representation from Africa, Asia and Latin America is required. It is inconceivable that an important global actor such as India would not be part of an enlarged Security Council.

Second, global peace needs equality.

We need to respond to one of the most critical and as yet unresolved problems of our time: the fact that women and girls are systematically denied the full enjoyment of their human rights. Violence against women is a global scourge. More than 700 million women are exposed to domestic abuse or sexual violence.

Gender equality is not simply a goal in itself, but also a precondition for achieving our wider foreign and security policy objectives.

No matter what you set out to achieve, change inevitably faces opposition. This also holds true for gender equality. Ghandi's famous words on the stages of non-violent activism lend support and encouragement: *First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.*

Third, global peace depends on our ability to instil hope and meet the aspirations of young generations.

Our success in building prosperous, sustainable societies and in preventing social unrest and youth radicalisation will depend on whether or not coming generations believe they have a future. A future in which they can study and find a job. Where their human rights are guaranteed and protected by their governments and leaders. And where they can realise their full potential as individuals.

Tagore knew this. He used his Nobel Prize money to found a university, Visva Bharati, in your home state (West Bengal), Mr President. And he wanted it to be a meeting place for the East and the West.

With these words, I have the great honour to leave the floor to you, Mr President, to share your reflections on the timeless and ever relevant subject of global peace.

Thank you.





Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech in the Iraq bill debate

Published 03 June 2015 Updated 09 July 2015

## Check against delivery

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Last autumn, the Government began exploring whether and how Sweden could expand its efforts to support democracy and human rights in Iraq, including in the Kurdish region in northern Iraq.

Along with all other EU Member States, Sweden is part of the international coalition of some 60 countries that has been formed to fight ISIL in various ways, stabilise Iraq and manage the consequences of this terrorist organisation's advances.

To date, Sweden has acted in three ways:

Firstly, politically, to achieve a long-term solution to the underlying political problems in the region that have allowed ISIL to gain a foothold. We are supporting political processes aimed in the long run at eliminating the breeding grounds of terrorist organisations such as ISIL.

This support takes the form of backing UN efforts to find a solution to the violence and civil war in Syria. And it involves promoting an inclusive and cohesive Iraq, in which strengthened democratic institutions will enable the country's many different religious and ethnic groups to influence developments.

The emergence of a society under the rule of law is necessary to fight terrorism in the long term. A long-term sustainable solution in Iraq must be political and be based on full respect for all population groups and religious minorities and their participation in political life.

Secondly, we are seeking to solve the urgent crisis on the ground to alleviate

suffering and distress. This is, not least, a matter of humanitarian assistance. We have provided – and continue to provide – extensive humanitarian assistance to those who have been forced to flee from their homes in Syria and Iraq. In all, Sweden has contributed SEK 1 653 million in humanitarian aid to Syria since 2011. In Iraq a total of SEK 422 million has been disbursed in support of humanitarian operations since 2012. And we support the stabilisation efforts the international community is planning. Swedish contributions are long term and include support for local governance in Dohuk in northern Iraq and Al-Qadessia in southern Iraq. Sweden is one of the last countries still engaged in long-term development cooperation with the Iraqi Government. Like others, we are also taking steps to prevent possible sympathisers from travelling to the region to take part in terrorist actions or terrorist training.

Thirdly, we have a generous refugee reception policy. Since the outbreak of the Syria/Iraq crisis, Sweden has received approximately 70 000 refugees. Sweden has received more refugees than any other EU country except Germany.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

It is clear that Iraq is in a position where military support is also needed to stop ISIL.

The Iraqi Government has requested support from the international community for the Iraqi defence forces, including the Kurdish Peshmerga units, and this is what the international coalition is now providing in the form of aerial support, equipment and training.

Since last winter, the Government has explored the possibility of Sweden also participating in the joint military training operations, just as Finland, Norway and Denmark have decided to do.

In early April, the Government presented a bill to the Riksdag proposing that Sweden participate in the military training operation in Iraq, more specifically in the part of the training conducted in the Kurdish region in northern Iraq.

The Government proposes that a Swedish armed force consisting of 35 persons be made available in 2015 to participate in the military training operation being carried out by the international coalition against ISIL in Iraq. Should the security situation deteriorate, it is proposed that the Swedish

Armed Forces be able to make temporary reinforcements to a level of 120 persons for evacuation and reinforcement operations.

The Government's decision is based on the consent of the Iraqi Government. This has been expressed through Iraq's concrete request for assistance to stop ISIL.

The United Nations Security Council has concluded that ISIL, and several other groups, represent a continued threat to international peace and security. *[UNSCR 2170]*

In light of the serious threat ISIL represents to the people of Iraq, Iraq requested the international community for urgent help to combat ISIL in a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations *[25 June 2014]* and a further letter to the UN Security Council *[20 September 2014]*. More specifically, Iraq said it would welcome military support provided in accordance with international law and without compromising the security of the civilian population. This request was responded to by the countries that are now assisting Iraq, and our aim is to meet Iraq's request to the best of our ability.

This demonstrates that the operation has a solid basis in international law.

The main tasks of the planned Swedish contribution will be training and advice to the Iraqi security forces, the Kurdish Peshmerga units, in northern parts of the country.

This may involve staff duties, weapons training, health care, defensive battles, urban warfare and detection of improvised explosive devices, as well as international humanitarian law and gender issues. As in all Swedish contributions, the gender perspective is a natural part of the work.

The Swedish Armed Forces will put together an all-round, fit-for-purpose force to manage the tasks included in the operation.

While Sweden's contribution will not, in principle, involve armed action, it must be able to provide protection for itself and for others. The Swedish forces may need to act in a way that goes beyond self-defence in order to protect material, locations and other units.

The Swedish force will be under Swedish national command and control during the operation. Necessary coordination will take place within the international coalition against ISIL, primarily with other actors in the area of

operations, including the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Finland.

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Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The Swedish women and men who are sent out into the world must feel that they have our full and undivided support.

I have listened to the speeches in this debate and, first and foremost, I appreciate the unity that I perceive. It is a fine Swedish tradition and a great asset to have political consensus on these matters. I hope that this is also the message we are now giving to those we intend to send on this very difficult mission to the complex and challenging situation they have to face. They should know that we are united, we stand behind them and we thank them for the duties they will perform.

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Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

ISIL's acts are merciless. Their aggression and hatred appear to know no bounds. Their objective is to inspire fear so that resistance gives way and violence can triumph. This must not be allowed to happen.

That is why the efforts of the international coalition against ISIL are crucial.

Cooperation against terrorism is the key to success.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Margot Wallström, at CARICOM's Foreign Ministers meeting in St Lucia

Published 22 May 2015 Updated 25 May 2015

CARICOM's Foreign Ministers meeting, St Lucia 22 maj 2015 Check against delivery.

Minister Baptiste, esteemed host of this meeting, Secretary-General, Ambassador LaRocque, fellow foreign ministers, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me first of all to thank you for the kind invitation to address you here today on the beautiful island of St Lucia. Our vision is to expand and deepen our relations with the Caribbean countries - bilaterally, multilaterally and regionally. For the long term.

We share many views and challenges. As small and medium-sized countries we promote a transparent and rules-based international system. We see the need for a strong and effective United Nations fit to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. And I believe we all see the need for more collaboration, more solidarity and more dialogue.

Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott wrote in *The Odyssey* that: "The future happens. No matter how much we scream."

This is indeed true. So, we have a collective responsibility to work for a better future. To tackle the challenges that we face together and strive to make the world a better place for our children.

I wish to use this opportunity to touch upon several areas where we see

opportunities for greater cooperation with you.

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Firstly, climate change.

Climate change is the challenge of our time. Hurricanes, floods and landslides. Droughts, food insecurity and sea-level rise. The effects of climate change are already taking a heavy toll on many countries, not least here in the Caribbean. We are seeing the effects already - it is not a question of effects in the distant future. These effects could shatter the important gains that have been made to combat poverty and build sustainable development. We have a responsibility to do everything in our power to change this trajectory.

Like you, the Swedish Government has made combating climate change a top priority. Cooperative responses are needed, including actions both at home and abroad. A global, fair and legally binding agreement at COP21 later this year is a crucial step towards a safer world that respects the boundaries set by our planet.

To achieve a positive outcome in Paris, we need to work together. Sweden is working both in the European Union and through the UN climate change negotiations to show that making the transition to a low-carbon development pathway should be seen as an opportunity, rather than a burden.

The important voice of the States in the Alliance of Small Island States must be heard in the UN climate change negotiations. When I visited New York in connection with the opening of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in April, I met and discussed this issue with colleagues from AOSIS. Their testimony made clear that the issue of climate change is an existential one for many island states. It is essential that the rest of the world fully understands this. Sweden has recently made a financial contribution to AOSIS in order to strengthen this voice in the UN climate negotiations.

Climate finance is another key issue in the negotiations. Financing is needed to support vulnerable and developing countries in their efforts to combat climate change and adapt to the impacts. Through our support to the Green Climate Fund - USD 580 million, making us by far the biggest per capita donor to the Fund - Sweden has shown that we are serious when we talk about this. This has also inspired and leveraged additional funding from other donors.

Our support to many of the global climate change funds has also given us the opportunity to influence the rules and practices of these bodies. Sweden has strived to increase access to climate finance for vulnerable and developing countries. We have listened to, and acted upon, the information we have received from your countries regarding the obstacles to accessing international climate finance, and we intend to continue to do so. Those most in need should be the first in line.

Along with Barbados and others, Sweden has successfully argued for the Green Climate Fund to set a floor of at least fifty per cent of the allocation for particularly vulnerable countries. And together with Grenada and others, Sweden contributed to the recent adoption of modified procedures for the Adaptation Fund for smaller implementing entities. This should increase access to climate adaptation finance for all small island developing states.

I am pleased that Sweden is collaborating with the SIDS DOCK (sustainable energy initiative) and the Caribbean Climate Change Community Centre in Belize on a project to facilitate enhanced resilience of the energy systems.

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Secondly, the ocean.

Our lives depend on the health of the ocean. Understanding the ocean is essential to protecting our planet.

The ocean binds us together. All over the world, women and men depend on the ocean for their livelihood and well-being. Protecting and preserving the marine environment and its resources is one of our greatest challenges. After decades of pollution, habitat degradation and overfishing, now climate change, ocean acidification, marine debris and increased pressure from mineral extraction, the health of our oceans is threatened in unprecedented ways.

This is a defining moment to honour the commitments we made in Rio. I believe Sweden and the Caribbean countries can work together to make a difference in the process for a global and legally binding instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources beyond national jurisdiction.

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Thirdly, the international efforts to combat illegal trade in arms.

Two years ago, the negotiations on an international Arms Trade Treaty were concluded successfully. This was an important achievement for the world.

Sweden has declared its support for Trinidad and Tobago's offer to host the Secretariat. We believe in spreading international cooperation geographically as a means of achieving a broader sense of ownership. We believe that locating the Secretariat in Port of Spain will reinforce the role that CARICOM can play in fostering South-South cooperation. Your experiences are much more relevant than those of many other countries, including my own. We must work for a strong Treaty that can contribute to effectively addressing the scourge of irresponsible, unregulated and illegal international trade in arms.

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Fourthly, a word about recent developments in the region.

I believe that all of us welcome the improvement in relations between the United States and Cuba. My deputy, the Vice Minister, recently visited Cuba with the aim of re-establishing the bilateral dialogue between Cuba and Sweden. The visit underscored the historical ties between our countries and demonstrated Sweden's commitment to strengthening the relationship and accompanying Cuba on the path of reform and modernisation.

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Colleagues, friends,

Thank you once again for allowing me to address you today. I sincerely look forward to deepened exchanges between us. I have touched upon several potential areas for closer cooperation. Let me conclude by highlighting a fifth area in which I think we could cooperate, namely gender equality. Twenty years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration, we see significant, but still limited, global progress with regard to eliminating gender discrimination. Women's rights are still violated in the world. My Government has launched a feminist foreign policy in order to ensure that these issues will figure prominently on the global agenda. I look forward to close cooperation with all of you also in this regard.

Only global solutions can meet the global challenges we face. We need to find these solutions together. Sweden is committed to contributing to these efforts. And this commitment is the foundation of our candidacy to the UN



Security Council for the 2017-2018 term, for which I hope we have your support. If elected, Sweden would once again have a seat on the Council after twenty years of absence. Sweden's candidacy is also a joint Nordic candidacy, and thus has the support of the other (four) Nordic countries.

We have a great deal of work to do together.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Margot Wallström, at the Asian African Summit, Jakarta, 23 April 2015

Published 23 April 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Asian African Summit, Jakarta 23 april 2015 Check against delivery.

Co-chairs, Excellencies,

It is an honour and a privilege to be here today, as you mark 60 years of Asian-African cooperation. Let me express my sincere appreciation for the invitation, and for the opportunity to be part of a meeting that gathers representatives of half of the countries of the world.

I am also happy to rediscover the beauty, hospitality and diversity of this vast country Indonesia, and to experience the consolidation of democracy and the progress made since my last visit in 2002.

Coming here, I travel in the footsteps of Sweden's late Prime Minister Olof Palme. In the early 1950s, a few years prior to the Bandung conference, he spent three months in Asia. From here, and from Indonesia in particular, he brought back ideas of non-alignment and international solidarity. Strong ideas that influenced the Swedish Social Democratic Movement and our international policies.

Co-chairs,

This is a summit of south-south cooperation to promote world peace and prosperity. I would like to add a perspective from the north. In many ways,

this is however a perspective that I believe is rather similar to yours.

Let me give three examples.

First, our solidarity with Palestine.

Among the first decisions taken by the new Swedish government was that of recognizing the State of Palestine. It was a decision taken with pride and joy. It aimed at making the parties to the conflict less unequal, to support moderation, and to provide a positive injection into the Middle East Peace Process. And it was a natural step to meet the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people of self-determination.

My government will continue to work hard, with you and others, to do what we can to bring the peace process back on track and to create conditions for a two-state solution where Israel and Palestine can live side by side in peace and security. We want to contribute to regional security and stability.

Sweden and Indonesia yesterday agreed to deepen our cooperation to contribute to the social and economic development of Palestine. We will exchange knowledge and best practices in areas such as democracy, good governance, human rights and gender equality. For us, this is part of our long-term significant – and now substantially increasing - development assistance to Palestine.

Some have said that the Swedish recognition of Palestine was premature. I say it might be too late. Young women and men in the Middle East are about to lose hope. They need to see an alternative to violence, status quo and continuously negative developments on the ground.

This leads me to the second example of perspectives that I believe we have in common: addressing global challenges and meeting the aspirations of the youth.

We live in a globalised world where the threats to our security of course are rather different from the ones we faced 60 years ago. The interconnectedness, the ability to travel and to trade, and the constant flow of information and ideas have made the globe smaller and more prosperous. But it has also brought more complex challenges: climate change, pandemics, foreign terrorist fighters, food insecurity, and organized crime.

Non-state actors kidnap school children and behead journalists. Conflict and disasters force an incomprehensible number of people to leave their countries and homes. Democracy and freedom of speech are under pressure,

and the multilateral system with its rules based order is being challenged. Extremism and radicalization illustrate that the problems we face have no boundaries.

While some countries are more severely affected than others, these are truly global issues. As political representatives of our countries we need to show leadership and courage to address these issues, to increase our international cooperation, and to do so in a way that installs hope in the youth.

We need inclusive socio-economic development that allows both young women and men to study, to find a job and to shape their own future. This is as true for Sweden and the rest of Europe, as it is for Africa and Asia. Educational and economic empowerment is also the best antidote against radicalization and terrorist recruitment. And as someone said: If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.

We need to be clear on our principles and obligations. Democracy and human rights are universal values and important tools in the creation of vibrant societies. They are also indispensable in the fight against extremism and radicalization.

And we need to involve both women and men. Gender equality is not only a goal in itself, but also a precondition for our wider foreign and security policy objectives.

My third example of a shared perspective brings us back to the theme of this summit. It is the need for dialogue. South-south cooperation is an important part, I see great value also in strengthening the relations between the EU and the African Union, ASEAN, the League of Arab States and other regional organisations.

At the heart of the global dialogue is the United Nations. Strong support for the United Nations has always been – and will always be – key to Sweden's foreign policy. Our candidacy for a non-permanent seat at the Security Council 2017 to 2018 is an expression of this. It's been 20 years since we last served at the Council – and we are ready to assume the responsibilities that a seat on the Council implies. As a member, we would continue our engagement for the issues I just mentioned: Palestine, the youth and global dialogue.

You – the African and Asian leaders of this room – represent countries with some 75 per cent of the world population. This needs to be reflected in the

composition of the Security Council. Sweden believes that emerging powers of Africa, Asia and Latin America must be provided with adequate representation in a reformed Council.

Co-chairs, Excellencies, Friends,

It is an honour to be here today. I am looking forward to continued dialogue and exchange of views in a spirit of solidarity, and wish you the best of luck with the meeting.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# The intended speech of the Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the meeting of the League of Arab States in Cairo 9

Published 09 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Cairo, Egypt 9 mars 2015 Published below is the intended speech of the Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the meeting of the League of Arab States in Cairo 9 March 2015.

Secretary General, Excellencies, dear friends,

It is a great honour for me to be standing here today. To be here in Egypt, in Cairo, in this building - the House of Arabs, is special. Egypt has always played an indispensable political, economic and cultural role in the region. And it is here that the Arab world, Africa and Europe meet.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Secretary General for inviting me to address this meeting. Your invitation is proof of the excellent relationship between the League of Arab States and Sweden - a longstanding relationship built on respect and commitment to serve the interests of the States and peoples that we represent, also in times of huge challenges.

In 1933, a time of crisis and depression for Europe as well as for the Arab world, a young Tunisian poet wrote about "The Will to Live":

"Those without passion to climb up the mountains,  
must live forever among holes in the ground"

I have always been inspired by the passion and energy that I see in the many

bright and highly motivated young people that I meet during my trips, especially in this region.

It is our responsibility, as leaders of our respective communities, to offer young members of our populations the means to fulfil their dreams and the possibility to live their lives in freedom, peace and security.

Excellencies,

The League of Arab States is a key partner for Sweden, as are your members. I highly appreciate the accreditation to the League of our Ambassador in March 2012.

The Swedish Government will put increased emphasis on the Southern leg of the EU Neighbourhood Policy that is being developed. North Africa and the Middle East are our neighbours and we will work together with EU partners and with you to make this shared region prosperous and peaceful.

Our destinies and paths are intertwined, through geographical proximity, history, economy and family ties. One fifth of all Swedes have a background outside the borders of Sweden. We have for example a large Iraqi diaspora - close to 2 per cent of our population - that is a vibrant part of our society.

Sweden is also extending a hand in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance throughout the region. Palestine, of course, is a case in point. So are those affected by conflict in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen and elsewhere.

We have in relative terms received more asylum seekers from Syria than any other Western country - approximately 65 000 in the last three years. Yet, of course, this is nothing compared to many of your countries. I especially admire the responsible approach of Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey towards Syrians fleeing the war. Efforts of others are equally important.

Excellencies,

As you are all well aware of, as the first EU member state, Sweden recently decided to recognise the State of Palestine. The Swedish government took this decision with joy and pride.

Our decision to recognise Palestine fully complies with international law. It is a natural step to meet the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to self-determination. The hard work of the Palestinian Government, state-

building and reforms have made Palestine ready to perform the duties of a state.

The recognition aims at making the parties of the conflict less unequal. It aims at supporting moderate actors in both Palestine and Israel. And it aims to provide a positive injection to the Middle East Peace Process.

Some say our recognition was premature. I say it may have been too late.

Young women and men in both Palestine and Israel are about to lose hope. They need to see that there is an alternative to violence, to a depressing status quo and to a continuously negative development on the ground.

I am heartened by the fact that our step is inspiring a renewed debate in Europe and beyond on what the international community can do to provide them with preciously needed hope.

We are very concerned to see how the economy of Palestine is being squeezed from several ends. Jointly with other EU member states we will do our utmost to try to alleviate the burden and to convince Israel to change its actions, in particular to fulfil their legal obligations to transfer Palestinian money to the Palestinians.

And we will work hard, with other members of the EU and the international community, and with you, to do what we can to bring the peace process back on track and to arrive soon at a two-state solution with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security.

Excellencies,

Together we face growing extremism and radicalisation. ISIL or Da'esh is an example in the extreme. We need to work together to fight this scourge, to identify and deal with its root causes and to do this while paying full respect to human rights and international law.

I wish to express Sweden's solidarity with all innocent victims, in so many of the Member States of the League of Arab States, that every month, every week, every day - suffer from the brutal violence that Da'esh and other terrorist organisations create.

Terrorism and foreign terrorist fighters illustrate that the problems we are facing have no boundaries. International cooperation is crucial while we still need to address these issues in parallel on local and national levels.



Tirelessly.

Excellencies,

Democracy, security and economic development are interrelated. Without progress in one of these fields, sustainable results in the other cannot be expected.

Inclusive socio-economic development is particularly important. Educational and economic empowerment is the best antidote to radicalisation and terrorist recruitment.

Employment is crucial, especially for our youth. Youth unemployment is a key challenge, in Europe and in this region.

Excellencies,

Human rights are a priority in Swedish foreign policy. Freedom of association, assembly, religion and expression are not only fundamental rights and important tools in the creation of vibrant societies. They are indispensable in the fight against extremism and radicalisation. So is a vibrant civil society.

Yesterday was International Women's Day. This is a day to celebrate women's achievements, recognise challenges, and focus attention on women's rights, women's representation and their adequate resources. Our experience is that women's rights do not only benefit women, but society as a whole.

More than 20 years ago, in 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development met here in Cairo to discuss various issues, including education of women and protection of women from all forms of violence, including female genital mutilation and sexual harassment. Many of these issues are still very much in play today and I urge you to contribute to upholding the agreements made here in Cairo 20 years ago.

Excellencies,

Many of you here today have the privilege of representing large young populations. They are a valuable asset. It is for their sake, and their children's sake, that all our efforts must be concentrated.

Many of them were not born 15 years ago when my predecessor and friend

Anna Lindh came to inaugurate the Swedish Institute of Alexandria together with Amr Moussa. Let me invite you to commemorate Anna Lindh and celebrate 15 years of the Institute this autumn. It will be a great opportunity to strengthen our ties and make use of this unique platform for dialogue and instrument to dispel dangerous ignorance.

Let us together break the negative spiral of war, conflict and terrorism into a movement towards democracy, respect for human rights and socio-economic development. We have to continue to create hope.

Thank you. Shukran.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Helsinki University

Published 03 March 2015 Updated 10 August 2015

Speech given at Helsinki University, 3 March 2015.  
Check against delivery.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Professor Laakso, Students,

One million, forty-two thousand and sixty-six. That is the estimated number of internally displaced persons in Eastern Ukraine. Recent reports about the humanitarian conditions highlights the increase in gender-based and sexual violence against women. Many women are forced to live in public places, such as train stations, where some of the perpetrators are men who have fought in the ongoing conflict.

Twenty-seven. That is the number of times the word ‘rape’ is mentioned in the latest report to the UN from the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic. The report describes crimes committed both by government forces and ISIL. Regarding ISIL, it says the following:

"Information collected recently indicates that groups of dozens of girls and women have been transported to various locations in Syria (...). There, the girls and women are raped and held in sexual slavery."

I am here to talk about why Sweden is the first country to declare that we will pursue a feminist foreign policy. Given these two examples, I hope it is obvious why we must include 100 percent of the population when we face war and conflict.

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I am honoured to address you at this prestigious research institution. I would

like to thank the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the University of Helsinki and the Finnish Institute of International Affairs for hosting us.

Thank you, Professor Laakso, for your introductory comments. I look forward to a discussion with you, Dr Jauhola and your students.

This year, the University of Helsinki will celebrate 375 years of learning and intellectual endeavour. It is a very fitting place to highlight one of the most acute challenges facing us today: How to effectively combat persistent, and in many places growing, human rights violations against women and girls.

I have divided my talk on this broad topic into three parts. First, I would like to set the agenda and discuss the need for gender analysis in international politics. I will then move on and describe the concept of a feminist foreign policy in more detail. Lastly, I will talk about areas where we can achieve real change.

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## 1. Setting the agenda

Gender analysis is as complex as it is crucial. It entails mapping, understanding and ultimately transforming norms, power structures and gender relations.

Traditional and narrow concepts of security still dominate the global agenda. There is a clear gap between what people in conflict zones experience – not least women – and the high-level discussions in the UN and elsewhere.

This gap is adequately captured by the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Leymah Gbowee in her book “Mighty Be Our Powers: How Sisterhood, Prayer, and Sex Changed a Nation at War”. Gbowee speaks about the multitude of sensitivities and risks of discrimination surrounding international peacebuilding efforts, and the challenges of ensuring inclusive processes:

"You cannot go to another country and make a plan for it. The cultural context is so different from what you know that you will not understand much of what you see. (...) People who have lived through a terrible conflict may be hungry and desperate, but they are not stupid. They often have very good ideas about how peace can evolve, and they need to be asked. That includes women. Most especially women. To outsiders like the UN, these soldiers were a problem to be managed. But they were our children."

The history of women and girls in conflict and war is one of silent suffering in the face of overwhelming insecurity. This is true also after peace agreements have been signed – by men of course – challenging the very definitions of peace and security.

It is often through personal biographies and fiction that we gain knowledge about massive violations against women in war and conflict zones. And there are many eye-opening accounts. One of the most exceptional writers of her generation, Sofi Oksanen has in a painfully effective way described the extreme vulnerabilities of women in the face of conflict, and their limited choices in structures defined and controlled by men.

Even today, when the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust have been mapped out, we still have only scant knowledge of the sexual violence that Jewish and other women were subjected to. The record of the Nuremberg trials comprises 42 volumes. Not one heading in these 42 volumes includes the words ‘rape’, ‘prostitution’ or ‘women’.

Impunity has reigned supreme for these crimes.

A huge and very welcome legal shift took place in the 1990s, notably through the Rwanda and Yugoslavia Tribunals, and later the International Criminal Court, recognising sexual violence as a war crime under international humanitarian law.

Enormous academic and political efforts have paved the way for progress. Finland’s contributions in this regard have been as outstanding as they have been crucial. Hopefully some of you in this room will carry that tradition forward.

Today, women in Syria, Iraq and Ukraine are under siege – in sexual slavery or in a train station, for example. Today, these crimes may have a name, but the road to justice still remains a long and uncertain one. When we travel down that road we must remember that women are not only victims or survivors, but most importantly strong actors for change in their societies.

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## 2. Some steps along the road: What a feminist foreign policy can do

Sweden’s feminist foreign policy aims at ensuring women’s rights and participation in central decision-making processes, including in peacebuilding efforts and peace negotiations. Gender equality is not just the

right thing to do. It is the necessary thing to do if we want to achieve our wider security and foreign policy objectives.

Feminist foreign policy will be an integral part of activities throughout the Swedish Foreign Service. Our methodology can be summarised in four words, all beginning with the letter “R”.

Reality check is about getting the facts right from the outset. What is the situation on the ground, if we want to include a 100 per cent of the population?

Rights – the simple fact is that human rights are also women’s rights. Here, two fundamental tracks must be followed when pursuing a feminist foreign policy. Firstly, there are areas where we must aim for prohibition, such as gender-based discrimination, forced marriages and female genital mutilation. Secondly, there are areas where the aim is progress, for example equal rights to inheritance and access to education and health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights. These areas are key to women’s empowerment.

Resources refers to Sweden’s ambitious international work, for example in development. The most basic starting-point here is the need to apply a gender perspective when distributing aid and resources.

Representation, which includes influence over agenda-setting, starts by asking a simple question: Who conducts foreign policy – at all levels? It starts at the highest level at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, where all the four top positions – two ministers and two state secretaries – are held by women.

I am very proud that Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven has made it very clear that gender equality is a whole-of-government priority. The Prime Minister himself will pursue the agenda in all facets of the Swedish Government’s work – in Sweden, in the EU and globally.

On the same note, I am grateful for a strong ally in Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja, who consistently makes the case for gender equality as a prerequisite for progress. We would like to work even more closely with Finland to push forward at the global level.

I am convinced that the Nordic countries have experiences to share. We have set a global example of how ensuring women’s rights has benefited

both women and men, and our societies at large. Step by step. Parental leave by parental leave. Pushing forward in all areas, we have started to transform norms and values.

### 3. How can we achieve real change?

In order to discuss what a feminist foreign policy can mean practically on the ground, let me return to one of the countries I mentioned initially: Ukraine. Women represent the largest group of internally displaced persons in Ukraine. A large number of women – exact numbers are unknown – remain in the conflict zone.

A recent visit to Eastern Ukraine by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency brought to light that women were more or less invisible in the humanitarian work, and in the reporting of the conflict.

No disaggregated data was available. Overall, very few of the international humanitarian organisations on the ground had considered the different needs of women, girls, boys and men. As I have already mentioned, there were several testimonies to the increased risks of sexual and gender-based violence, and trafficking.

Building competence and capacity in humanitarian and military structures is paramount to addressing these shortcomings.

15 years ago, the ground-breaking UN Security resolution 1325 on women peace, and security was adopted. Without a doubt, 1325 has impacted global policies and forced the issue of gender-based violence onto the global agenda. However, 1325 has so far failed to bring about real transformative change in how we operate with regard to gender in peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

In some cases, national action plans under 1325 have proved to be potentially important vehicles for this to happen. But, ultimately, what it takes is political will. No matter how many documents we sign. If the will to act is not there, we will not move forward.

To date, only 46 UN Member States countries have adopted National Action Plans. This is way too few. And even when national plans have been adopted, too little concrete action has been taken. Accountability mechanisms are clearly too weak and must be given greater consideration.

Together with Finland and Denmark, Sweden has proposed the establishment of a high-level position in the European External Action Service, responsible for promoting gender equality and ensuring effective implementation of 1325 in EU operations. We believe such a function would be instrumental in strengthening the EU's gender approach to peace and security.

And secondly: Over the past 20 years, only 8 per cent of the mediators in UN-led peace processes have been women. Of all the peace treaties signed during 2011 and 2012, only 20 per cent contained language on women's security, which raises the question: Security for whom? Therefore, Sweden is considering how to support a network of women mediators.

\* \* \*

Dear friends,

A feminist foreign policy aims to respond to one of the greatest challenges of this century: The continued violations of women's and girls' human rights – in times of peace and in conflict. Failing to do so will ultimately undermine our overarching foreign policy and security objectives.

Fifteen years into the 21st century, the world is torn by conflicts that are more complex and more difficult to solve than ever before. Today, 1.5 billion people live in fragile states and conflict zones, placing far-reaching demands on international peacekeeping and crisis management. International actors are under pressure to adapt – moving towards the protection of civilians rather than observing ceasefires.

Applying routine gender analysis, strengthening the collection of gender disaggregated data, improving accountability and bringing women into peace negotiations and peacebuilding will be key in moving forward.

When doing so, let's remember how the Swedish feminist and author Elin Wågner compared values and ideals to old-fashion bicycle lights: They don't light up until you pedal forwards.

In our work for global gender equality, Sweden and Finland can do great deal in together. I am confident that many of you in this room will help us when we pedal forward.

Thank you.







Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech at the 28th regular session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

Published 02 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

United Nations Human Rights Council, Geneva 2 mars 2015 Check against delivery.

Thank you Mr President. High Commissioner, Excellencies.

My friend and predecessor Anna Lindh once said: “Human rights are praised more than ever, and violated as much as ever.” We truly live in troubled times of unrest where good news are too rare, and reports of human rights violations are too many.

When Boris Nemtsov was shot in Moscow two days ago – those bullets also hit the Russian people and affected the rest of the world.

All human rights are indivisible and mutually reinforcing. It is through cooperation, dialogue and with mutual respect that we can ensure compliance with human rights law.

We stand up for the human dignity, integrity, freedom and inviolability of the individual. That includes taking a stand against states claiming the right to execute, torture or imprison people in contravention of international norms. We are deeply concerned over the excessive application of the death penalty and call on governments to halt executions and introduce a moratorium on capital punishment.

It is true that women’s rights are human rights, and human rights are women’s rights. These can never be set aside with reference to culture, tradition or religion. The Swedish Government wants to strengthen gender

equality, improve women's access to resources and increase women's representation - we call it a feminist foreign policy. Furthermore, a key focus is to help protect female human rights defenders – “femdefenders” who often are particularly at risk.

All discriminatory barriers to women's economic empowerment must be removed. Equal right to inheritance is crucial in this context. Likewise, women must be allowed to control their own bodies. Sweden will continue to increase respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights and strive for their inclusion on the new global development agenda.

We must increase our efforts both to take preventive measures and to combat impunity for gender-based violence. This is true both in times of peace and in connection with armed conflicts such as in Syria and Iraq. Gender-based violence can also be part of atrocity crimes. Let us make our most to prevent genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious international crimes, and make sure that the perpetrators are held accountable.

The economic, social and cultural rights are crucial for the survival and health of millions of people and for their working conditions. Sweden will fight different forms of forced labor and child labor, and defend a person's right to form and join trade unions, negotiate and take industrial action.

Safeguarding human rights also implies a responsibility to fight racism and discrimination. Building sustainable societies requires inclusive participation of all individuals, regardless of their origin, religious beliefs, political opinion or sexual orientation. This remains a challenge and priority also in Sweden. Our experience is that civil society often plays a key role in promoting and protecting human rights.

Free speech, free media and active journalists play a key role in ensuring human rights. We cannot stand idly by while freedom of speech is threatened. We cannot stand idly by while journalists are imprisoned, kidnapped and killed. Last year at least 60 journalists were killed. We must ensure a stronger protection of these vital voices.

We witness the barbaric offensive by ISIL. Events such as those in Nigeria, Middle East, Paris and Copenhagen prove that we all face the challenge of violent extremism. However, efforts to counter extremism must be in line with our democratic values and our conviction that we can all live side by side regardless of religion and ethnicity. The fight against terrorism must

always fully respect human rights.

The new challenges show that it is time for us to sharpen our work. Sweden will present a new strategy on human rights, democracy and rule of law which will guide our efforts in these fields.

Sweden attaches great importance to the work of the Human Rights Council, including the Special Procedures, to address specific country and thematic situations. Sweden will continue with our strong support for the mandate of the UN special rapporteur on human rights in Iran. The EU continues to follow the situation in Palestine with close attention and we call on Israel to fully cooperate with the Human Rights Council, including through issuing a standing invitation to all UN Special Procedures.

In conclusion, we need to work together and ensure that the UN delivers. 2015 is a key year for global efforts. Through the UN we can take concrete steps for human rights and democracy, to achieve peace and security, gender equality and sustainable development.

I repeat “Human rights are praised more than ever, and violated as much as ever.”

Let us rise to that challenge.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement to the Conference on Disarmament

Published 02 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

United Nations, Geneva 2 mars 2015 Check against delivery.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies.

I am glad to be here in Geneva today, to address the Conference on Disarmament on issues of top priority for Sweden.

Setsuko Thurlow, one of the survivors of the Hiroshima bombing, visited the Swedish Parliament a few months ago. She gave voice to the great concern that she and other hibakushas feel: that the bomb, also today, affects her children and grandchildren, and will affect her future great-grandchildren and also their children.

Compared to the nuclear weapons of today, the bombs that were dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki were simple and crude; still, they killed 200 000 people outright or in the aftermath, maimed many more, and brought complete devastation on two cities.

Today, more than 16 000 nuclear weapons remain. This is unacceptable. The call from the men and women of Hiroshima and Nagasaki rings clear: We need to move further and faster on nuclear disarmament. All nuclear weapons must be abolished.

There are positive developments. Three international conferences have been held, highlighting the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons for men, women and children. Human beings have once again been put at the heart of our discussions.

A humanitarian perspective on nuclear weapons helps us bring disarmament

forward. Sweden will work actively with all stakeholders, at the upcoming NPT Review Conference and beyond, to pursue effective measures to eliminate all nuclear weapons.

Today, I am pleased to announce that Sweden is returning to the de-alerting group. There is widespread agreement that hair-trigger alert multiplies the risks associated with nuclear weapons. De-alerting is an important risk reduction measure on which real progress can be achieved in the short term. We look forward to working with our partners Chile, Malaysia, Nigeria, New Zealand and Switzerland on advancing this issue.

Mr. President,

Important work is done here in Geneva in the wider field of disarmament.

Questions of life and death must never be delegated to machines. We welcome the continued discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems at the CCW (Convention for Certain Conventional Weapons). We are actively preparing for these discussions and have asked SIPRI, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, to study possible ways forward on central issues, such as definitions and transparency.

The Ottawa Convention that bans anti-personnel landmines is one of the most successful conventions in disarmament. Mine clearance and assistance to survivors have brought relief to affected people, countries and regions everywhere. But much remains to be done. Sweden will do its share and continue its longstanding and active engagement in mine action worldwide.

I am glad to announce that Sweden will soon have decommissioned all its cluster munitions, in accordance with our obligations in the Convention that bans this inhuman weapon. For the ban to become effective, it is important that also the world's largest manufacturers and users of cluster munitions join the Convention.

We are deeply concerned about reports of the use of cluster munitions against civilian populations in South Sudan and in Syria. The use of cluster munitions is unacceptable, and Sweden calls on all actors to strictly observe International Humanitarian Law.

Mr. President,

Contagious disease used as a weapon continues to be a major global security threat. To understand the potential dangers we need only to look at the

Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Sweden is a major contributor to the fight against Ebola, and will continue to help strengthen states' capacity to prevent, detect and respond to epidemic outbreaks in Africa and elsewhere.

Sweden will do its part in promoting a constructive and tangible outcome at next year's Review Conference for the Biological Weapons Convention. The universal adherence to the Convention is of particular importance, as well as the strengthening of confidence-building measures.

Mr. President,

The peaceful uses of outer space have contributed immensely to the welfare of people around the globe. This has to be safeguarded and strengthened so that more countries – and people – can benefit from space services.

Sweden welcomes that discussions are moving forward on how to update the international rules on outer space. I would especially like to highlight the International Code of Conduct for Activities in Outer Space, which will provide voluntary "rules of the road" to counter the pressing issue of space debris and help prevent conflicts in outer space. The Code will also be a complement to and help achieve a legally binding instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Mr. President,

I warmly welcome the initiative to hold a CD Civil Society Forum. Civil society organisations represent our people and contribute with expert knowledge, and should be allowed to participate in all non-negotiating sessions.

I regret that no new negotiations have been undertaken by the CD despite many vigorous efforts. A Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty, an FMCT, should have been concluded many years ago. We call on countries to remedy the blockages and stop linking items. If the Conference remains unable to fulfil its mandate, we will need to consider other possible avenues for bringing disarmament work forward, including the UN General Assembly. The key word is progress – not process.

This year, it is 70 years since nuclear weapons were used in armed conflict for the first and, I very much hope, the last time. In light of the worsened security situation in Europe, the abolition of nuclear weapons is more important than ever. It is only through their total elimination that we will

have a real guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used again. We owe it to Setsuko Thurlow, to all hibakushas, to their and our children and grand-children, to pursue and conclude this work with vigilance.

Thank you.





Speech

# Statement of Foreign Policy 2015

Published 11 February 2015 Updated 11 March 2015

Mr/Madam Speaker,

We share a common destiny, and we do so at a time of greater insecurity.

When this chamber debated foreign policy a year ago, the Russian aggression against Ukraine was beginning – the greatest challenge to European peace and security since the end of the Cold War.

In 2014, the civil war in Syria deepened and ISIL commenced its barbaric offensive.

State violations in the east and state breakdowns in the south also have repercussions for Sweden.

They lead to tension in our neighbourhood, flows of refugees and a growing proportion of our population who bear the painful memories of war and conflict.

And the defining issue of our time – climate change – also constitutes a global security threat.

But increased insecurity must not overshadow global progress. Extreme poverty and infant mortality are declining. Technology is advancing. Our interdependence is growing.

Our common destiny confers two main tasks on Swedish foreign policy. We must make the most of the benefits, which are so significant. And we must manage the risks.

Our foreign policy is therefore focused on broad international collaboration and cooperation:

with our neighbours, within the European Union, and as a more active member of the United Nations.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden's voice in the world is stronger when joined with those of the other EU Member States.

We welcome the fact that the European Union has presented a united response to the developments in Russia and Ukraine. Sweden will continue to strive for a policy that is as clear in its demands for respect for international law as in its support for the right of every country to determine its own future.

We support the efforts being made right now to find a political path towards easing tensions.

And perhaps most importantly: we must help Ukraine to be successful, just as we will contribute to the continued development of the EU's Eastern Partnership as a lever for those countries that have chosen the European path, whereby bloodshed on the battlefield is replaced with patience at the negotiating table.

In this spirit, Sweden is pushing for an open EU that is committed to Turkey's accession process, to the normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo, and to continued reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a view to future EU membership. Sweden supports the UN-led negotiations for the reunification of Cyprus.

The EU needs broader international engagement, a concerted global strategy and strengthened crisis management capabilities. Sweden will soon command the EU naval operation Atalanta, and a Swedish-led rapid reaction force – the Nordic Battlegroup – stands ready for deployment by the EU during the first half of 2015.

We cooperate within the EU – and the EU must cooperate with others. Strong and concerted EU action is in our interests. Sweden will strive for better European dialogue with other regions and countries. In more uncertain times, close transatlantic collaboration between the EU and the United States is particularly important.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. Threats to peace and to our security are best averted collectively and in cooperation with other countries. Sweden does not participate in any military alliance. It is impossible to imagine military conflicts in our region that would affect only one country. Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected. Our country must therefore be in a position to both give and receive support, civilian as well as military.

While the situation in our neighbourhood makes it necessary to strengthen Sweden's defence capabilities, we are continuing to develop our military cooperation: with Finland, with our other Nordic neighbours, with the Baltic countries and with NATO. In the latter case we, together with Finland and others, are now taking new steps as part of an upgraded partnership. Sweden will continue its active engagement and participation in international operations under the aegis of the UN, the EU, NATO and the OSCE.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

At global level, the United Nations plays an absolutely crucial role for peace and security. It therefore needs to be strengthened – and the UN's place in Swedish foreign policy is therefore now being restored. We want and are able to take responsibility for joint solutions through the UN. Sweden's candidacy for a seat on the UN Security Council in 2017–2018 is a concrete expression of the Government's desire to influence the course of global politics.

One expression of our belief in a global peace policy is our contribution to the UN operation in Mali. This will be our first major contribution of personnel to a UN-led operation since 2006. We are also participating in a number of other operations, many under the aegis of the UN, including in South Sudan, Liberia, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Middle East. The Government believes that Sweden should take part in more UN-led operations.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Together with other members of the UN, the EU, the OSCE and the Council of Europe, we defend the human rights that apply to every individual. We do so wherever these rights are attacked, and regardless of whether the people affected are in a magazine's editorial office or a supermarket in Paris, in a market in Nigeria, or on an idyllic island in Norway.

International law demands respect for the Charter of the United Nations and for the principles of territorial integrity and prohibition of violence enshrined in it. Genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious international crimes must be combated and punished.

The work of the International Humanitarian Law Delegation must be reinforced, and should also focus on disarmament.

Safeguarding human rights is a cornerstone of Swedish foreign policy. A strategy for human rights, democracy and the rule of law is now being drafted.

Economic, social and cultural rights are crucial to people's working conditions and welfare. But in today's global economy, human rights are frequently violated in working life. Sweden will fight different forms of forced labour and child labour, and defend a person's right to form and join trade unions, negotiate and take industrial action.

Safeguarding human rights also implies a responsibility to fight racism and the collective labelling of various groups, for example in terms of religion. At the same time, freedom of expression and freedom of the press must be defended. We cannot stand idly by while freedom of speech is threatened, or while journalists are imprisoned, kidnapped and killed. Defending human rights includes taking a stand against states claiming the right to execute, torture or imprison people in contravention of international norms.

For decades, Sweden has led the way on sexual and reproductive health and rights. We want to increase understanding of these rights, and strive for their inclusion on the new global development agenda. Oppression on the grounds of people's sexual orientation must be countered.

In 2014, more than 100 million people needed humanitarian support and more than 50 million were forced to flee their homes. This is the most serious situation since the Second World War.

The international community must take action by improving the situation of refugees and ending the conflicts that force them to flee. Sweden is one of the largest donors to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and will contribute SEK 640 million in non-earmarked core support in 2015.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs now has a strong and evolving crisis response organisation. Protection of and support to Swedes abroad is a

priority, whether it is a matter of a lost passport, a serious illness or detention.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The distinction between foreign and domestic policy is becoming blurred. In a connected world, policy areas are intimately linked and the concept of security has become broader.

Through the UN we can take a number of important steps, and 2015 is a key year for global efforts. To achieve peace and development, we need initiatives for democracy, sustainable development, gender equality and prudent use of our natural resources. At a time when the ecosystems that support life are being depleted and a changing climate poses a threat to our future, it is crucial that fresh progress is made.

At this year's climate conference in Paris, Sweden's goal is to reach a global, fair and legally binding climate agreement that will keep the average increase in global temperature below two degrees.

By strengthening our climate ambitions in Sweden and the EU we can contribute to reduced emissions and impacts from climate change throughout the world. This year, Sweden will contribute to deeper analysis of the impacts of climate change on peace and security.

Alongside a new, strong climate agreement, another priority will be the formulation of new global sustainable development goals that must apply to all countries. Financing for sustainable development is crucial and requires a coherent policy on development. Sweden will be a bridgebuilder and have a strong voice in international development policy. The Government stands by its commitment to contribute one per cent of gross national income to aid.

Taking a broader view of security, gaps between rich and poor must be regarded as a cause of tensions and conflicts. Combating poverty and inequality is also a security policy task. Aid and development cooperation are important components of these conflict prevention efforts.

We will continue to seek effective and common tools to fight international terrorism, without compromising the fundamental values of democracy and the rule of law that we must defend.

Among the new security threats that must be fought, we are seeing cyberattacks, espionage, cybercrime and digital propaganda wars. Acute

outbreaks of epidemics, such as Ebola, are another reminder of the threats to our security. This also applies to the increasing prevalence of antibiotic resistance, which is a danger to health and the environment. The Government wants more effective efforts within the WHO and other bodies to address the challenges to our health.

The Government therefore intends to invite experts and representatives of civil society and government to a special conference. The Government will hold cross-party talks about the broad security challenges facing Sweden and how they can be addressed.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

In these unsettled times, it is crucial that we take resolute action for disarmament and nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Sweden will work together with like-minded countries to draw attention to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and to eliminate all nuclear weapons.

We will work for more effective implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and the universal adherence to and implementation of the UN Arms Trade Treaty.

Decisions on life and death cannot be delegated to machines. We therefore want to see continued discussions on autonomous weapons systems. North Korea's attempts to develop nuclear weapons are a cause for concern. The Government wants to contribute to disarmament and peaceful development on the Korean peninsula through a policy of critical engagement.

A conclusion of the negotiations on Iran's nuclear technology programme will be very important for the region and for the goal of non-proliferation.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

We are concerned by the tensions between Israel and Palestine. Sweden will push for intensified EU engagement for lasting peace, together with the UN and other parties in the region, and the rest of the world.

The Government values continued broad and good relations with Israel, and we are showing our long-term commitment to Palestine by introducing a new five-year aid strategy with significantly higher aid volumes.

The radicalisation that grows out of hopelessness must be countered. Young Israelis and Palestinians must be convinced to believe in a better future. Through our recognition of the State of Palestine, Sweden wanted to demonstrate that the two-state solution is not merely an abstract vision. There is a political path away from hopelessness and violence.

The situation in the Middle East remains worrying, and in some places desperate. The whole international community must support the peace efforts in Syria led by the UN. What began as a popular uprising against Assad's repressive regime has developed into a humanitarian disaster, with repercussions far beyond Syria's borders. We must all give our support to the moderate forces around the region that seek consensus across geographical, ethnic or religious boundaries.

Sweden, like the rest of the EU, is part of the broad coalition against ISIL. We are one of the largest humanitarian donors. The Government is looking into the possibility of sending Swedish military personnel to Iraq to help train troops fighting ISIL.

Atrocities must be recognised for what they are. ISIL's violence and terrorism are of the most pervasive and heinous kind. There must be consequences for such crimes. Those guilty must be held to account and punished, be it for genocide, crimes against humanity or other mass atrocities. The Government, together with the other EU countries, has urged the UN Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

In large parts of Africa, Latin America and Asia, important developments are under way.

Sweden needs to continuously review and renew its cooperation and dialogue with an Africa undergoing rapid change. Our cooperation and dialogue are rooted in a historically established commitment that spans the entire African continent. Conflicts are still occurring, international crisis management operations remain necessary and the rules for conflict minerals need to be tightened. But we must also embrace sustainable economic growth and greater regional responsibility, not least on the part of the African Union.

In Latin America, Sweden looks forward to deepening political contacts and economic relations, especially through our broad strategic partnership with Brazil. The EU's free trade agreements provide opportunities to develop Sweden's economic exchange with a number of countries, based on long-term Swedish support for freedom and democracy development.

The rapprochement between the United States and Cuba is historic and inspires hope. One important component of the Government's commitment to democracy, human rights and reforms in Cuba is the re-establishment of a bilateral dialogue.

The economic, political and demographic developments in Asia in recent decades are unparalleled. Sweden must make use of the resulting new opportunities opening up there. We want to contribute to sustainable social development on a democratic foundation and with respect for human rights.

The Government is seeking closer economic and political cooperation with China, and it goes without saying that this will involve a frank dialogue on human rights.

Sweden is strengthening its civilian involvement in Afghanistan, with a focus on the situation of women and girls. The security situation remains a challenge. Since the beginning of this year,

Sweden has been participating in the NATO-led military training and advisory mission – the Resolute Support Mission – and we are involved in the EU Police Mission.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden will promote free and fair world trade. The WTO must be strengthened as an organisation. We attach great importance to the Doha Round and to negotiations on environmental goods and services.

Special priority will be given to concluding the negotiations between the EU and the US on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership agreement, TTIP. In addition to economic reasons, the agreement is strategically important in order to strengthen the transatlantic link. A free trade agreement between the EU and the US should be both deep and comprehensive, and cover all important aspects of trade and investment. The Government's goal is to achieve as ambitious a result as possible to support growth and employment – without impairing the possibility of strengthening



environmental protection, the interests of wage earners and the health of people and animals.

The Government will work for progressive international trade agreements and to dismantle trade barriers. Within the EU, Sweden will push for a free and fair trade policy and a deeper internal market. Priority will be given to efforts aimed at entering into free trade agreements between the EU and other economically important actors. In the OECD, we will act to reduce protectionist tendencies, including from the G20 countries.

Promotion of exports, imports and investment in Sweden is an integral part of foreign policy and thus the responsibility of the entire Government. An export strategy will be prepared so that more small and medium-sized enterprises are able to enter an international market, and so that more Swedish companies are able to enter markets with high growth potential.

A presence in new growth markets requires active efforts on sustainable business practices. We want to see the innovative capacity of Swedish companies mobilised so as to contribute to more jobs, greater growth and sustainable development.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

A feminist foreign policy is now being formulated, the purpose of which is to combat discrimination against women, improve conditions for women and contribute to peace and development. Women's participation in decision-making must be strengthened in countries at peace, countries in conflict and countries in which reconstruction is under way. This will also strengthen the sustainability of our societies.

Concrete steps to promote the status and rights of women are also being taken through increased cooperation with civil society and with our partners in the EU and the UN. Together with our Nordic EU friends, we have proposed appointing an EU representative for gender equality and the implementation of Resolution 1325, which was adopted fifteen years ago this year. We will also continue our efforts to combat impunity for gender-based violence, which is necessary both in times of peace and in connection with armed conflicts.

UN Member States should advance efforts for the human rights of women and girls, their right to economic empowerment and their right to control their own bodies. It is particularly important this year, when the international

community is to affirm the commitments concerning women's conditions that were made in Beijing in 1995. These conditions must be improved – not undermined.

A feminist foreign policy will be an integral part of activities throughout the Swedish Foreign Service, and aims to strengthen women's rights, improve women's access to resources and increase women's representation.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The insecurity in our region, the ruthlessness of terrorism, the irrefutable fact of climate change, the vulnerability of the cyber society and the injustice of inequality all serve as a reminder. It is precisely at this moment – in unsettled times – that we must not hesitate.

The values that guide Swedish foreign policy still stand out as an uncommonly modern basis on which to organise a community. Cooperation with our neighbours, to guarantee peace and create common security. Solidarity that knows no borders, aimed at increasing equality and eradicating poverty. Gender equality and a feminist foreign policy, since human rights are also women's rights. Sustainable development, in light of the fact that last year the world was warmer than at any time since records began in 1880.

These are the building blocks for a foreign and security policy to feed into a broader discussion in our country. A policy that is guided by the necessity of common security and the realisation that we share a common destiny. Where my destiny is your destiny, and the destiny of others is our own.

The Government is determined that, in these unsettled times, Sweden will take global responsibility by being a strong voice in the world. For freedom, peace and human rights. For democracy, equality and solidarity.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech in the UN Security Council: "Protection of civilians in armed conflict"

Published 30 January 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

United Nations Security Council, New York 30 januari 2015 Check against delivery.

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

First, let me thank the Assistant Secretary-General Kyung-wha Kang and Dr Helen Durham from the ICRC. I would also like to thank, in particular, Ms Ilwad Elman from the Women, Peace and Security working group. The role and influence of civil society in preventing conflict and building peace are essential and must be supported.

For more than 150 years, the international community has been in agreement that warfare should be made less inhumane, through the rules and principles of international humanitarian law. Civilians should be protected in armed conflict. We need to prevent and to respond to mass atrocity crimes, in accordance with the Responsibility to Protect. However, these rules and principles are challenged and sometimes even ignored. Civilians are particularly exposed in today's complex and often protracted conflicts, as we have seen in the Middle East and in West and Central Africa. This is for instance the case in Syria (and Iraq) where hospitals and schools are being made the actual targets of warfare. This must stop.

Women, men, girls and boys face different threats and difficulties during and after conflict. International humanitarian law does not always assist in

addressing these threats and difficulties. The laws of war were written during a time when only men were defined as combatants and the responsibilities of women were seen as far distant from the battlefield. A stronger gender perspective needs to be applied to international humanitarian law.

Mr. President,

Women and especially girls are particularly exposed to violence in conflict. Violence against women affects a third of all women globally. The violence is often amplified in areas affected by conflict. As we see in many parts of the world today, extremism and terrorism are prominent features of conflict situations, often constituting new kinds of threats to women's rights and lives and causing flight and displacement. We need to prevent and combat these violations of women and girls' fundamental human rights.

Gender inequalities lie at the heart of the issue. Progress on gender equality and women's rights is a goal in its own right but it also remains a critical factor in achieving poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Furthermore gender equality helps to prevent sexual violence in/and armed conflicts. We must therefore firmly address the root causes of gender inequality. This includes changing laws, norms, practices and attitudes in societies that are denying women and girls' human rights. It also means pursuing laws, including equal rights to inheritance, and policies that ensure women's political and economic empowerment, secure sexual and reproductive health and rights and policies that improve women's security. And not least, we must guarantee the right to quality education for all women and girls.

The fight against impunity for sexual and gender-based violence is also crucial. Each state has a duty and a responsibility to investigate and prosecute such crimes. It is primarily at the domestic level that solutions to the impunity gap must be found. The role of the International Criminal Court is complementary, but nevertheless crucial in ensuring that accountability is achieved. We therefore welcome and support the undertakings and in particular the special policy of the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in order to more efficiently investigate and prosecute SGBV crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court. We furthermore recall the unique capacity of Justice Rapid Response, in close cooperation with UN Women, to address situations where expertise is needed for investigating SGBV crimes.

Mr. President,

Women are first and foremost actors and agents of change. Sustainable peace and security can never be achieved if half the population is excluded. In excluding women, we are also excluding the contribution of those sectors of society which are considered as feminine or to be women's duties. These often include raising children, education, health care, and taking care of the elderly. When these sectors, which are vital to the long-term success of nations, are not adequately represented in decision-making, it is to the detriment of peace and security. We need the participation of both women and men in formal and informal processes, in mediation, peace negotiations, and humanitarian and peace-building efforts to bring in new angles, solutions and perspectives to problems.

Mr. President,

This year provides an unique opportunity to assess and accelerate the implementation of the WPS agenda. Currently, several critical reviews are under way, including the UN Secretary-General review of peace operations, the review of the UN's peacebuilding architecture, the review of the Beijing Platform for Action and the High-level Review of Resolution 1325. In order to ensure coherence, all these reviews and especially their recommendations and outcomes should take into account the implementation of 1325 objectives in a coordinated manner. To promote the Women, Peace and Security agenda is not an isolated issue. On the contrary, it is a major part of the Peace and Security agenda.

Mr. President,

Although there has been an increase in the number of mandates of UN missions that include references to women, peace and security, this is not enough. All mandates should be based on a gender-sensitive conflict analysis in order to also be tailored to the security needs and ensuring the participation of women and girls. Gender issues should be part of reporting requirements and all UN missions should have a gender advisor at the strategic level, supplied with resources respective to his/her tasks. Leadership is critical in ensuring progress on this agenda, at the highest levels of the UN, as in member states.

Lastly, I would like to underline the importance of the Post-2015 Agenda. Among others, the Nordic countries support the gender equality goal (Goal 5) and the goal on freedom from violence and peaceful societies (Goal 16) proposed by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development, which together includes targets concerning the prevention of all kinds of violence,

including violence against women and girls. We believe that the Post-2015 Agenda represents a unique opportunity to address violence against women, including sexual violence, on a fundamental level. It is a chance to make real progress!

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the United States Institute for Peace

Published 29 January 2015 Updated 10 August 2015

United States Institute of Peace, Washington D.C. 29 January 2015. Check against delivery.

Dear friends and colleagues,

It is a pleasure and honour to address you today. Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words about Sweden's feminist foreign policy and the global challenges facing us today.

I particularly look forward to what is certain to be a rich discussion following my introductory remarks.

Let me start by saying how impressed I am by USIP's commitment to advancing the agenda for gender and peacebuilding, while consistently aiming to improve action on the ground. If we are to more effectively address the challenges facing women – and indeed facing societies at large – the link between analytical work and operative measures clearly needs to be strengthened. USIP plays a crucial role in providing that link. I want to particularly thank Ambassador Bill Taylor for opening USIP to us and so graciously hosting me here today. And I want to extend a warm thank you to Dr Kathleen Kuhenasst, Director of the Gender and Peacebuilding Center, for all the preparation she and her team have done for today's event, but more importantly for the work you do every day to move this agenda forward. Thank you!

I also want to take the opportunity to express my appreciation and support for the leadership of the US administration, and that of the many excellent

American civil society organisations, private sector actors and academic institutions for their efforts in advancing this agenda. It takes the effort of many to make a difference!

## A feminist foreign policy

In October last year, as I walked to the Royal Palace in Stockholm for the formal transition of power following the September elections, a journalist asked me about my priorities and vision for Sweden's foreign policy. My answer was clear: We are going to pursue a feminist foreign policy.

My statement has since then been received with much enthusiasm, but also a fair share scepticism, to put it kindly. Just as the suffragettes at the turn of the 20th century, fighting for their political rights in the UK and the USA, were met with considerable derision – even the term “suffragettes” was initially intended as a mockery - the notion of “a feminist foreign policy” has also given rise to irony among some observers. However, looking back, history proved women right and our democratic institutions are stronger for it. Today, the idea that women could be excluded from Parliament, or their right to vote questioned, would be seen as an utter contradiction in terms. So as we move forward, I take great strength in Gandhi's words: “First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.”

A feminist foreign policy essentially seeks to address what former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has so aptly described as “the great unfinished business of the 21st century”.

Many countries, including my own, are still characterised by the systematic subordination of women. In many parts of the world, the fact that women and girls continue to be denied their human rights constitutes a growing threat to peace and security. Women are also increasingly becoming the target of violence as a means of control to prevent them from exercising their rights.

A newly published report by the World Bank shows that in most of the world, no place is less safe for a woman than her own home. More than 700 million women globally are subject to physical or sexual violence at the hands of their husbands, boyfriends or partners. Not only is impunity widespread, in many countries intimate partner violence remains outside the law, and in some cases even allowed by law.

The extent of this problem is dramatic and in many places violence against women and girls is seen as the norm even by women themselves. In the World Bank's recent analysis, derived from 52 developing countries, one in



three women agree that wife beating is justified for going out without permission.

Striving towards gender equality is not only a goal in itself, but also a precondition for achieving our wider foreign, development and security policy objectives. Working towards greater gender equality and ensuring women's rights is therefore at the heart of the Swedish Government's foreign policy. I will focus here today on the 'how' and the 'what' of our feminist foreign policy. What are our priority areas and what are the tools at our disposal to advance the feminist foreign policy agenda?

a. Rights, representation and resources There are three indispensable and interdependent concepts that are crucial to the 'how' of moving the feminist foreign policy agenda forward: RIGHTS, REPRESENTATION and RESOURCES – “the feminist toolbox”.

First, respect for human rights and the rule of law constitute essential starting points for every discussion about gender equality. Ensuring women's rights and access to justice must be seen as central to achieving the overall human rights agenda. This is far from today's reality. Women's rights are often seen as a specific and separate issue. We will need to work multilaterally and bilaterally, creating global coalitions in order to ensure that gender perspectives are included in strategic discussions, decisions and, most importantly, concretised at country level.

Second, increasing women's representation across the board – in governance and peacebuilding efforts, in economies and core institutions – is a *sine qua non* in achieving gender equality. Only through women's active participation at different levels of decision making can we transform agendas so that the needs and interests of women are truly reflected and addressed.

Reality on the ground gives considerable scope for improvement: out of 585 negotiated peace agreements from 1990 to 2010, only 92 contained references to women. From 1992 to 2011, fewer than 4 per cent of signatories of peace agreements, and less than 10 per cent of peace negotiators, were women. Furthermore, women head only 19 per cent of all UN field missions. 97 per cent of military peacekeepers are men. Do I need to go much further? We will actively advocate women's inclusion in all peacebuilding processes, but also initiate measures in order to create a network of women mediators that can be called upon. I do not want anyone to say that there were no competent women around to involve.

We will continue to support women's organisations in conflict and post-

conflict settings, in cooperation with civil society and through the UN. Achieving a better gender balance in UN peacekeeping operations is long overdue and we will give this issue full priority.

Finally, resources to achieve these ends must be increased and channelled in such a way so as to ensure that essential gender goals have financial backing. As an example: today only one per cent of spending in security sector reform is allocated to initiatives which consider gender equality a significant objective. Furthermore, in a sample of six post-conflict countries, less than eight per cent of spending was specifically budgeted to empower women or promote gender equality. Increasing and redirecting resources towards gender-specific targets will require political commitment and specific budgeting, but more importantly budgetary methods that direct major flows of money to support gender targets. We will develop and bring such methods to bear at home and in foreign policy settings.

Achieving gender equality will require new and coherent approaches, upstream and downstream, including everything from agenda setting, information and data gathering, analysis and decision-making, and intervention design to follow-up and accountability. Accountability will be key.

b. Prioritised areas: Much of what we are already doing – politically, in pursuing international law and within the context of Swedish development cooperation – will continue to be prioritised within the feminist foreign policy framework. We will continue to give priority to the following five interdependent pillars, which we see as essential to achieving gender equality targets and improving the lives of women and girls.

1. Rule of law and human rights. These are crucial elements and constitute both the means and the end. Delivering on binding commitments and developing central aspects of international law in a gender-sensitive manner are of paramount importance.

Despite the difficulties experienced in many contexts, we must aspire to move beyond merely defending current achievements – not least to counteract the notion that women's rights can be denied by reference to traditional norms and religious beliefs.

2. Combating gender-based and sexual violence in peace time and in conflict remains a core priority.

- Violence against women and girls remains a global epidemic. Women in particular are vulnerable in conflict. Gender discrimination and deep inequalities are at the heart of this issue. It is only through consistent work to achieve progress at all levels that we can hope to mitigate women's particular vulnerabilities. The fight against impunity for sexual and gender-based violence, in peace time as in conflict, is of course crucial.

- Let me elaborate a bit further on gender-based violence in conflict: 2015 will mark the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the ground-breaking resolution 1325, which established the agenda on women, peace and security. However, ensuring results on the ground is still an outstanding challenge in many ways.

- Our goal must be to bring gender aspects and priorities to the heart of peacebuilding and peacekeeping. We must ensure women's full inclusion in all phases of formal and informal processes. Women's representation remains marginal and gender aspects tend to be seen as complementary, rather than central to the successful outcome of the operations. Sustainable peace and security can never be achieved if half the population is excluded.

- A number of reviews directly related to women, peace and security are currently under way. In addition to the 1325 review later this year, the UN Secretary-General's review of peace operations and the review of the UN peacebuilding architecture offer crucial avenues for addressing several of these aspects and ensuring implementation of the main objectives of resolution 1325 across the board.

3. The third pillar, which Sweden has consistently championed for a long time, concerns sexual and reproductive health and rights.

- This is an area of work that represents perhaps the greatest normative challenges. While maternal health – and to a certain degree even reproductive health – have become accepted benchmarks, sexual and reproductive rights remain highly controversial. This is true in many parts of the world, including the EU. Important progress and central elements of the EU acquis have regrettably been undermined, so we have work to do in our own backyard as well as on the global level.

- The issue of women's reproductive rights is an issue that concerns the whole of society, men and women alike. Involving men in this work is therefore just as crucial as increasing women's representation in relevant contexts and forums. Education and dialogue are key.

4. The fourth pillar concerns another crucial building block of a feminist foreign policy: the economic empowerment of women for overall development and growth. We must combat discrimination in the labour market, but also promote women's legal rights with regard to inheritance, land acquisition and possession, as well as equal access to various social services.

5. Finally, we will also integrate feminist perspectives in our work to promote sustainable development and tackle climate change and other related threats. The post-2015 agenda will offer important opportunities to mobilise a feminist agenda and promote gender-sensitive approaches in all of these areas.

## Putting our own house in order for delivery on a feminist foreign policy

Success will, however, ultimately depend on our ability to mobilise, inspire ownership and develop adequate working methods. This in turn will require investing in capacity building and raising competence levels. I have therefore initiated an overhaul of my foreign service in order to ensure that the necessary competencies are developed and integrated into all sectors of the Ministry's work. Following a great example by the US administration, I have appointed an ambassador at large for women's issues and gender equality to be responsible for coordinating Sweden's feminist foreign policy. We have also taken steps to involve civil society at an early stage of this process. The role of civil society will be crucial both upstream in defining priorities and downstream in implementing the policy on the ground.

## Conclusion

Before I close, I would like to say a few words on women's rights defenders. They are true heroes of our time. Fighting relentlessly for women's rights, often in very difficult circumstances and at their own peril, they prove that women are at the forefront of the struggle for equality and change. But their struggle comes at an unacceptably high price.

Many of these women are confronted on a daily basis by an incomprehensible level of hate, threats and violence. In a recent survey conducted by the Swedish NGO "Kvinna to Kvinna", more than 60 per cent of the women interviewed had experienced public abuse, violence or received online threats; 14 per cent reported that they had been the victims

of attempted murder, 29 per cent had received death threats in public places and 21 per cent had been sexually harassed.

By calling for increased influence and measures aimed at improving the lives of women, women's rights defenders are in fact challenging existing power structures and the distribution of power. Violence is a way of trying to silence these efforts for change and development. Therefore, supporting and defending the women who are fighting for women's rights is crucial to the overall struggle for human rights, peace, democracy and the rule of law. I count on your support.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Presentation of the Challenges Forum report "Designing Mandates" to UN Secretary- General Ban Ki-moon, 27 January 2015

Published 27 January 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

UN Headquarters, New York 27 januari 2015 Check  
against delivery.

Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, Partners, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address you today on behalf of the Challenges Forum Partnership, which brings together practitioners and decision-makers from 21 countries and six continents committed to making peace operations more effective and better fit to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Peace operations is one of the most important and visible instruments in the UN tool box, and the demand for them is ever growing. While this can be seen as a positive sign of the trust and confidence that the international community places in the UN for managing conflicts, it also puts increasing pressure on the UN – alongside regional and other actors – to deliver more effectively on their peacekeeping mandates.

My own country, Sweden, is deeply committed to peacekeeping. Over the years, more than 80 000 Swedes have served in UN peace operations. Our deployment to MINUSMA, in Mali, is the most recent expression of this commitment. As we are now deploying, our troops will join their colleagues from other troop contributing countries in UN missions around the globe, who put their lives in harm's way in the pursuit of peace. They will face

many challenges.

What can we do in response to the changing nature of conflict and the new kinds of challenges facing peacekeepers in different conflict arenas around the world?

First of all, we must recognise that although there are challenges, these are not insurmountable. By partnership and cooperation between all stakeholders we can find a common way forward.

There is a need to rethink and transform the approaches to UN peace operations. Many times the developments on the ground have outpaced the progress in strategic-level policy and operational guidance.

Going forward, we need to:

- 1) close the gap between the strategic and tactical levels of peace operations, not least with regard to the ability to respond more swiftly to contingencies at all levels;
- 2) enhance cooperation between the UN and regional organizations engaged in peace operations, and
- 3) better equip and train peacekeepers in order for peace operations to fulfil their mandates in increasingly volatile environments.

These are some of the main conclusions of the report *Designing Mandates and Capabilities for Future Peace Operations* by the Challenges Forum Partnership.

This report is the result of a two-year undertaking and contains a range of findings and 24 targeted and realistic recommendations. I would like to highlight two issues in particular:

First, the need for gender mainstreaming, both in the way that the peace operations are designed, and how they conduct their work in the area of operation. Much has happened since UNSCR 1325 was adopted in 2000, not least on the normative level, but work is still lagging behind in practice. Gender mainstreaming in peace operations is critical simply because it does make a real difference for the effective implementation of peacekeeping mandates. Reaching out and encouraging the active involvement of women in the peace efforts, in the local communities and around the negotiation tables, enhances the prospects for a lasting peace. I know from personal

experience, in my capacity as SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict, how important this is.

Second, there is a need to further incorporate modern tools and technology in peace operations, as a means for tackling new and emerging threats. This serves the purpose of enhancing the safety and security both of the civilian population of the host nation and the peacekeepers themselves, and thus also improving the operational efficiency of the mission. With our contribution to MINUSMA, Sweden aims to help develop the capacity of UN operations to gather and process intelligence, which is expected to contribute to a more effective implementation of Security Council mandates.

On two previous occasions, the Challenges Forum Partnership has presented major reports on the challenges of peace operations to the UN Secretary-General, in 2002 and in 2006. The first was presented by my dear friend Anna Lindh, the late Foreign Minister of Sweden. Today, it is my honour to present a third Challenges Forum report to you, Mr. Secretary-General.

Before doing so, I would like to conclude by thanking everyone who has contributed, intellectually and otherwise, to the work of the Designing Mandates report. This includes all Partner Organizations, as well as the International Secretariat of the Challenges Forum.

The report's findings and recommendations have a wide buy-in from Partner Organizations from both the Global South and the Global North. We hope that it will may inform the ongoing review of UN peace operations.

Mr. Secretary-General, on behalf of the Challenges Forum Partner Organizations, it is indeed a great honour for me to present this report Designing Mandates and Capabilities for Future Peace Operations to you, and to ensure you of the Challenges Forum Partnership's continued and unwavering support to enhancing peace operations, one of the most valuable tools of the UN.





Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech at the UN Peacebuilding Commission-meeting on ebola

Published 26 January 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

New York 26 januari 2015 Check against delivery.

Let me first express my deepest condolences to the families of all those who have perished in the Ebola epidemic. I commend Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea for their determination in facing this formidable challenge. And I pay tribute to the many brave healthcare workers engaged in the medical response and acknowledge the support provided by the UN and other international partners. Continued attention and support to fight Ebola is still needed.

Sweden has made significant contributions to the response to Ebola. We have provided about USD 73 million, as well as healthcare workers and other experts – mainly in Liberia, but also in Sierra Leone.

As Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's Liberia configuration, we have actively advocated that commitments and pledges made to the global Ebola response must be translated into action on the ground.

We have also stressed the importance of addressing immediate peacebuilding needs and meeting the broader security, developmental and governance challenges along with the medical public health response.

And we have pointed to the need to prepare for the medium term by planning for enhanced and accelerated peacebuilding support in the aftermath of the immediate crisis.

Alongside emergency support, beginning to prepare for the post-Ebola recovery phase will be critical. Not least considering the severe impact the epidemic has had on the economy.

However, the current outbreak also once again demonstrates how urgent it is

that all countries have strong, resilient and integrated health systems, capable of fully implementing the International Health Regulations and having the capacity for health-related emergency preparedness. They must also make progress towards achieving universal health coverage that promotes universal, equitable access to health services and ensures affordable, quality service delivery.

The post-Ebola recovery in Liberia will take place as the UN peacekeeping mission (UNMIL) begins to transition out, and as preparations commence for the important presidential elections in 2017. Although the epidemic has affected men and women to the same degree when it comes to the total number of infected individuals, in some respects women have been particularly hard hit. A recent World Bank survey from Liberia shows that in the last three months, 60 per cent of the women were unemployed, as compared with 40 per cent for the male population. Women have also been severely hit by the non-existent or limited access to healthcare in connection with antenatal care, births and the health of newborns.

We therefore look forward to the Ebola Recovery Assessment led by UNDP. We welcome the inclusive process, with special emphasis on the affected countries in which the assessment will be conducted. We note that the review will cover four areas of priority: peacebuilding, social services, economic recovery and infrastructure.

Let me stress that peacebuilding is not only about governance and the rule of law. It must be an integrated part of all four of these pillars. Capacity building and the strengthening of national institutions must be at the centre of these efforts. We hope that the findings of this assessment will include recommendations on the way forward and provide input for a renewed and focused commitment to peacebuilding in all the affected countries.

The PBC will continue to play an important role in providing a platform for coordination and mutual commitment, and in linking the relevant developmental, political and security aspects. We look forward to continuing to support this process, not least in the role of Chair of the PBC Organisational Committee for 2015, for which we have been nominated by the Western European and Others Group and hope to be appointed shortly.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the SIEPS conference ‘Does the EU take Fundamental Rights Seriously?’

Published 08 December 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

Royal Coin Cabinet, Stockholm 8 december 2014  
Check against delivery.

Friends of human rights, friends of the EU,

Earlier this autumn I was at Kulturhuset for the commemoration of Armistice Day. There we listened to Hédi Fried, a survivor of Auschwitz. The story of her life led me to think of an essay by author Per Wirtén, who points out that the European peace project is not symbolised by some shining statue of liberty. It is not naive euphoria but rather our dark history that underscores the necessity of peace – and thus of the EU.

Wirtén writes with gravity that in Auschwitz you become a European. Seeing a whole new generation of young people visiting concentration camps and synagogues, he feels optimism. He believes a European self-awareness – rooted in the seriousness of history – is coming into being. The insight that we must learn from history in order to avoid it being repeated was the conclusion drawn by Hédi Fried that evening at Kulturhuset as well.

Sweden’s decision 20 years ago to fully shoulder its European responsibility and join the EU was a wise one. In a troubled time, with conflicts both in our own region and in Syria and Iraq, the values upon which the EU rests provide an excellent foundation for the role that Sweden should play in

European and international politics.

One example of the values that the EU rests on is the protection of human rights, which is the main topic of today's conference. I would like to thank the Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies and the Swedish Foundation for Human Rights for organising this afternoon and encouraging an important debate.

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Let me begin by raising three examples with a view to adding some further perspectives on the overall issue of human rights and protection of human rights.

I recently took part in a conference on 'Femdefenders' – women who demand to have their human rights taken seriously, despite constant opposition. Every year, more than a billion women and girls are subjected to violence. This is the most common cause of death and the main cause of impaired mobility among women. The report 'Femdefenders' published by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation describes one of the reasons why women are not able to enjoy their human rights: hatred of the courageous women who are on the front line fighting for those very rights.

The European Trade Union Institute, based in Brussels, monitors conditions in the European labour market. The report 'Benchmarking Working Europe 2014' charts a disturbing development in the wake of the financial crisis. Between 2008 and 2014, the number of EU citizens who are unemployed increased from 16 million to over 25 million. In many countries, labour rights have come under pressure. Among young people in particular, unemployment is high and working conditions are poor. In the UK, the debate has come to focus on the growth of zero-hours contracts, a form of employment in which the employer does not promise the employee any working hours at all.

Last week I participated in the OSCE Ministerial Council in Basel. Civil society organisations held a conference in parallel to our ministerial meeting. Their report describes an increase in violence due to hate, affecting various religious and ethnic groups, migrants, Roma and LGBTQ people. The report presents several suggestions on what the OSCE can do to stop the violence and hatred that in some countries is spread even by the media and during election campaigns – two institutions that should actually guarantee human rights.

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After these broad reflections, I would like to turn specifically to the EU's role in protecting human rights in the EU. First I will talk about the current situation: what are Sweden and the EU doing at a time of multiple challenges, and what principles guide us? After that, I will comment on EU proposals on strengthening the rule of law. Finally, I will discuss EU enlargement and our eastern neighbourhood.

\* \* \*

## 1. The current situation: what are we doing, and what are our guiding principles?

Human rights are one of the cornerstones of our foreign policy. They guide Sweden's action in the EU and globally. They establish that all human beings, irrespective of country, culture and context, are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

But unfortunately we live at a time when our common values are being challenged, as racist and populist parties grow in several EU Member States. This trend is not only affecting the Swedish Parliament, the Riksdag, as we saw last week; it is also affecting EU cooperation and the work of the European Parliament.

Despite the differences within our Union, we must now hold on even more strongly to the common values on which the EU rests. It is therefore important to recall what Sweden and the EU are already doing to strengthen the protection of human rights and the rule of law in Europe.

The fundamental principle is that power must never become arbitrary and individuals must be able to assert their rights. Here at home, we have the Instrument of Government, which declares that all power is exercised under the law. The Treaty on European Union speaks of the rule of law as a fundamental value.

Human rights live in symbiosis with the rule of law. A functioning state governed by law is the prerequisite for people being able to enjoy their rights. Having said that, the rule of law is not just a means to an end; it is also an end in itself.

What I am talking about now is not the rule of law as a separate sector, or as

something that only concerns the police, prosecutors or courts. I am talking about a principle that must prevail wherever public power is exercised and individuals' rights are affected.

Sweden has long been an important actor in reforming legislation and strengthening legal institutions in developing countries and conflict environments. As many of you know, I have personal experience of this kind of work, not least following my time as United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

In that capacity I met women in Bosnia and Herzegovina who had been subjected to sexual abuse in connection with the war in the 1990s, but who have still not obtained redress via the rule of law. A woman may be forced to see the man who committed the assaults grinning in the queue at the bank. Naturally the result is that confidence in the rule of law is undermined.

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Sweden has also played a leading role in developing new tools to strengthen the rule of law in public administration. I recently visited Ukraine, where Sweden is now starting extensive cooperation together with the Folke Bernadotte Academy, which is also represented here today. The measures being taken aim, for example, to ensure that individuals are treated in a legally certain way when they apply for ID documents, various types of permits, or basic needs such as electricity and water.

One of our most important tasks right now is to ensure that the rule of law is explicitly included in the UN's new development goals. This is a challenge, but governance and the protection of rights should have a given place in such an important document. I would therefore like to emphasise that the Swedish Government will actively promote making the rule of law a separate objective with clearly defined indicators, even if the competition is tough as the list of desirable objectives and priorities is already long.

## **2. EU proposals: strengthen the rule of law!**

As I mentioned, we are witnessing disturbing developments in some EU Member States. The independence of legal institutions is being curtailed, people's fundamental rights are being violated, the ability of civil society to function is being impaired. This is unacceptable and unworthy of a citizens' Europe.

The EU must therefore develop the instruments to assert and defend respect for human rights and the rule of law. This applies both with respect to the EU's own citizens and in relation to countries outside the EU. But then the Member States themselves must live up to the EU's common values.

The Venice Commission of the Council of Europe has stated that certain constitutional amendments implemented in Hungary threaten the independence of the judiciary and jeopardise the principles of the separation of powers. The European Commission and the European Parliament have also criticised Hungary in certain respects. This, in part, is the backdrop to an interesting question that has come to the fore: how is the EU to deal with issues of Member States' compliance with fundamental rights and the rule of law? Another issue discussed is the situation of the Roma.

The challenges to the rule of law are not unopposed. Several Member States, including Sweden, have called for clearer action from the Commission when a Member State acts in a way that is incompatible with EU values.

It was therefore very welcome when the Commission presented its proposal on a new EU framework to strengthen the rule of law. The Commission has a special responsibility as guardian of the treaties. The new framework clarifies this responsibility and the power of the Commission to act.

The idea is to give the Commission tools to conduct dialogue and make recommendations when a Member State risks infringing the fundamental values to which it has committed itself. The framework will be activated in the case of serious and systemic threats to the rule of law, when the national systems are not deemed capable of averting these threats.

The framework complements the mechanisms already offered by the sanction procedure in Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union, and the Commission's powers to initiate infringement procedures.

The Government considers it important that the framework covers the maintenance of EU values and that it is applied in situations where individual cases indicate structural shortcomings to do with the rule of law. These might include cases where judges are dismissed from office or from a case without just cause or cases in which the ability of civil society organisations to function is seriously curtailed.

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Another welcome development is that the First Vice President of the Commission, Frans Timmermans, has been given overall responsibility for matters relating to the rule of law and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. This sends an important signal that these issues must always be considered in the work of the EU.

Right now the Member States are also discussing how the Council can develop its own work to strengthen the rule of law. One method discussed is regular dialogues in the Council to increase the shared understanding of compliance with the rule of law.

One element of such a dialogue might be how to make better use of existing information, such as reports from the Council of Europe and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. This would avoid unnecessary duplication.

I hope that these new tools will enable the Commission and the Council to complement one another, with a view to strengthening work on the rule of law and contributing to the EU's democratic legitimacy. Ultimately this is about the credibility of the EU as a citizens' Europe.

### 3. EU enlargement and our eastern neighbourhood

In his essay, Per Wirtén describes a car journey with his daughters through eastern Europe. They travel through towns and countryside that Wirtén had last visited a few years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The author writes about a social, economic and political miracle that can only be compared with the boom years in western Europe between 1945 and 1970. But that recovery was largely dependent on support from the United States. Eastern Europe has risen thanks to the EU's own intrinsic strength.

The political and economic reforms that the enlargement process has brought have also played a decisive role in transforming these countries into functioning states under the rule of law, where human rights are respected. The enlargement process is undoubtedly one of the most important tools we have for EU influence in our vicinity as well.

So our efforts to safeguard human rights do not end at the EU's borders. Strengthening human rights within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy has high priority. By means of the 'more for more' principle, the EU is encouraging much-needed reforms in the partner countries. The more reforms a country implements, the more financial



incentives it enjoys.

The Eastern Partnership is based on the partner countries' gradual association with the EU's principles and fundamental values. The recently signed association agreements with Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, for example, contain important human rights clauses.

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Europe is also unique in having the Council of Europe, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the European Court of Human Rights, with their strong contribution to a working legal order. As is well known, individual people can hold governments to account before a European court for infringements of fundamental rights – a unique process without parallel elsewhere in the world. To join the EU, a state must also become a member of the Council of Europe and sign the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

The Council of Europe also has another role: to be a bridge between the EU and the Council's members in the EU's eastern neighbourhood. The aim is to strengthen the pan-European protection of fundamental rights and freedoms. Consequently, the Council of Europe has a key role in consolidating human rights and promoting democratic development.

The crisis in Ukraine has made this role even more obvious. The process of strengthening the organisation of society in Ukraine – and the structures of the judicial system and administration – is a laborious task that will only achieve success in the medium term. It is a process that requires purposefulness, perseverance, strength of will – and a continuous struggle against the corruption that risks undermining the process of reform.

\* \* \*

There have also been great developments in the EU's foreign policy approach to human rights and democracy in recent years. The Strategic Framework and the associated Action Plan, together with the appointment of the EU's first Special Representative for Human Rights, have created real conditions for more concerted action. Since the mid-1990s, the EU has also engaged in separate expert-level dialogues on human rights with non-EU countries.

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to measure the impact of the EU's human rights efforts. However, one concrete result is that the EU has succeeded in securing the release of many human rights activists through active and engaged efforts.

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Friend of human rights, friends of Europe,

At the end of his essay on Europe, Per Wirtén quotes Swedish feminist and author Elin Wägner. Wägner made a comparison that is very appropriate at this time in December, when darkness already descends in the afternoon. Your ideals are like old-fashioned bicycle lights: they only shine when you're cycling forwards.

Now I look forward to listening to your discussions. I expect to find inspiration for our common efforts to spread light across the European continent, where human rights must be safeguarded – and xenophobia driven back.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the seminar about #femdefenders, arranged by Kvinna till Kvinna

Published 28 November 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

Medlehavsmuseet, Stockholm 28 november 2014  
Check against delivery.

Dear friends,

It is an honour to be here with key women human rights defenders from all around the globe. Let us start by declaring that women who defend women's rights are defending all human rights. Human rights are indivisible.

The organiser of today's conference – Kvinna till Kvinna – supports no more than 130 women's organisations in five regions afflicted by conflict. Thank you for your important work, and for bringing us together today.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the mandate of the 'Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences'. The current special rapporteur, Rashida Manjoo, notes that we therefore have an important opportunity. It's time to reflect on the global developments towards the elimination of violence against women and girls. At the same time we must also identify new and remaining gaps and challenges.

Manjoo, whom I have met on several occasions, concludes that violence against women is – and I quote – “a pervasive and widespread human rights violation” that has “reached epidemic proportions in some parts of the world”. A recent WHO report indicates that violence against women is the

number one cause of death and disability among women – violence that affects well above one billion women and girls.

That is a statistic that almost makes you lose all hope. But when you lose all hope, you can always find it again.

In the new report ‘Femdefenders’, published by Kvinna till Kvinna, the Secretary General Lena Ag writes the following, and I quote again:

“Women are not only victims. Throughout the world there are those who organise themselves and resist. People who stand up for girls’ and women’s right to education, the right to their own bodies, the right to move freely in society – and the right to be involved in shaping the future of our societies. They are our femdefenders.”

As I continued to read the report, my hope grew as I read about Brikena Puka from Albania and Lara Aharonian from Armenia. These brave women are here today and they will be joined by Mary Jane Real from the Philippines in a discussion later.

And for those of you who have travelled far: when it’s 08.40 on a November morning in Sweden, you have the right to be tired. But standing here I have the opportunity to look out over a room full of femdefenders, determined to fight for women’s rights.

I mentioned hope, and that’s what we must give each other.

\* \* \*

I would like to make three main points. First, I will talk about the hate and threats against women who stand up for their rights. Secondly, what does this mean for a feminist foreign policy? Thirdly, I will comment on a few policy proposals I have received from Kvinna till Kvinna.

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## 1. The general picture

The new report that I mentioned, ‘Femdefenders’, maps and reveals the hate expressed against women who stand up for their rights. The report also highlights the often systemic and structural discrimination and violence facing women human rights defenders.

There are a number of different threats which I have seen in my own work – each summarised by Kvinna till Kvinna in a few words – that femdefenders are facing across the globe:

- Sexualised violence.
- Isolation through scare tactics if you dare to act.
- Rumours and slander.
- Silence and lack of action.
- Authorities as perpetrators.
- Shrinking space for human rights through restrictive legislation.
- Monitoring and mapping on the internet.

These threats must be brought to the attention of the public. Visibility helps in addressing the fact that far too many individuals and organisations engaged in promoting and defending human rights do face threats and harassment. Moreover, they suffer insecurity and restrictions in freedom of expression.

I recall a meeting in Colombia, where violations against human rights are a persistent problem. I met a group of women in a small wooden house in an IDP camp. Plastic chairs were brought out and put in a circle, and the women told us their stories.

One woman described how she locked herself in every evening, fearing for her life. Her husband had beaten her up badly; she had lost her teeth and had bruises everywhere. The next woman told a story about how her daughter had been missing for the last ten years, nobody knowing what had happened. Then a woman described how her whole family had been threatened because of her fight for human rights, and how you might have to be separated from your loved ones in order not to put also them into danger.

It was an afternoon of sad stories and desperation, also because they saw no point in going to the police. They knew that some of the policemen had raped women in the camp. The question must be asked: What happens to a woman, to a family, to a village and to an entire country when there is a total lack of justice?

It must also be known and dealt with that women who are human rights defenders often face particular risks. Hina Jilani, previously the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders, has no illusions about why women defenders arouse more hostility than their male colleagues: “As women, human rights defenders may defy cultural, religious

or social norms about femininity and the role of women in a particular country or society.”

Hina Jilani’s words ring true to us all, but the question is how a feminist foreign policy can be a part of the solution.

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## 2. A feminist foreign policy

As you might have heard, the Swedish Government will pursue a feminist foreign policy. I have started to develop this ambition around three concepts: representation, resources, and respect.

Representation, which includes influence over agenda-setting, starts by asking a simple question. Who takes part in conducting foreign policy – at all levels? It starts at the highest level over at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs – where all the four top positions, two ministers and two state secretaries, are held by women. It must continue in every other part of the Ministry: when ambassadors are appointed, when mediators and their teams are sent to conflicts, and when a position as mid-level executive is filled. But it is also about the knowledge and awareness about gender equality among all our staff in the Ministry, both at home and abroad. To this end, I have already initiated a process within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs involving all of our different departments.

This signal seems to have an effect already. When I have ambassadors visiting me, they often start by saying that they, for example, “have appointed three new women to the government in their country, and today we have this and that proportion of women in politics.” Something seems to be happening.

The term resources highlight Sweden’s ambitious international work, for example in development. Let me use an example about a bridge in Sri Lanka, which in a simple way captures what it means to have a gender perspective when distributing resources.

Sweden has an impressive number of activities and projects abroad, but when we distribute our foreign aid – do we always make sure to include a gender perspective in what we do? I think the answer is increasingly so. But when the plan for this bridge in Sri Lanka was presented, women could point out that one thing was missing: a lane for pedestrians. Men travel by cars and

motorbikes, but women and children often walk. In the end, the bridge turned out to have an effect on gender. How a bridge is built can discriminate against women in their everyday life. Therefore it can also be a symbol of the necessity to always include a gender perspective when we distribute resources.

Respect is about what femdefenders do on a daily basis: it's about women's rights, and let me develop this part of a feminist foreign policy in more detail.

It is my ambition to actively address the structural and historical inequalities in power relations from a rights perspective. Inequalities are founded on discrimination and reinforced by extremism and fundamentalism, which are root causes and serve to condone the violence. These matters are also pointed out in the UN resolution on protection of women human rights defenders. The resolution was adopted in the UN General Assembly last year.

The protection of women's enjoyment of human rights is of fundamental importance for each and every individual. It is a must for the prosperity and development of societies at large. No country can afford gender-based discrimination, which also constitutes a major obstacle to sustainable development.

If you aim at pursuing a feminist foreign policy, the work must follow two paths when dealing with women's human rights. There are areas where we must aim for prohibition, such as in relation to gender-based discrimination, forced marriages and female genital mutilation.

Secondly, there are areas where the aim is progress, such as in regard to equal rights to inheritance, access to education and health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights. These areas are key to women's empowerment.

To this end, it is pivotal to promote UN special rapporteurs – like you, Asma Jahangir. In these roles the rapporteurs can help strengthen national investigation, prosecution, legal reforms and law enforcement to promote women's human rights.

One focus now is to support the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in promoting gender justice by combating impunity for sexual and gender-based crimes. We must also support the ICRC in engendering international humanitarian law.

In order to promote women's rights, it is crucial to cooperate with civil society and the organisations represented here today. Without people like you, with the courage you have demonstrated in spite of harassment, violence and personal sufferings, women's human rights would have been even worse than they are today.

I do indeed want to pursue, expand and explore further approaches to cooperating with you for the common goals we have in strengthening women's rights. I will need your advice when moving forward with our feminist foreign policy. But first, let me bring out the tool-box and discuss a few concrete policy proposals.

### 3. The feminist foreign policy tool-box

Before coming here today, I received some very useful recommendations from Kvinna till Kvinna. Let me mention them, while adding a short comment.

a. "Recognition and rights: The single biggest threat to women's rights defenders is the lack of recognition from governments and international bodies. The work on women's human rights is not seen as part of the 'real' work to promote human rights."

Comment: This analysis is correct. I can promise to support and hopefully develop the existing legal framework supporting the work of femdefenders.

b. "Support: Strong women's organisations increase the chances for better laws and policy in terms of gender-based violence."

Comment: Absolutely, this is also something I learnt as the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General. In terms of funding and support, the Government has presented a budget that hopefully will pass through the Riksdag next week. I'm glad to announce that we will increase the support to women's domestic violence shelters by an additional SEK 100 million.

c. "Meet: By meeting women's rights defenders during official visits to their countries and by inviting them to international conferences we can hear their analysis."

Comment: I saw in today's paper that Lena Ag, the Secretary General of Kvinna till Kvinna, asks if I met with women's organisations in Ukraine. The answer is yes, that was the first thing we did. I met with La Strada – a



Ukrainian civil society organisation working on women's issues.

During my travels abroad I will always ask to meet with civil society organisations before I meet with representatives from the government. I will do so since I know that it will give me different and important perspectives. In Ukraine I also discussed the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) with the Prime Minister, and during our press conference he actually promised to ratify it.

I have also declared that our foreign policy will be solidly based in civil society, and being here this morning is one example.

d. "Diplomatic dialogue: Kvinna till Kvinna also urge me to underline the importance of organisational freedom and femdefenders' living conditions in the diplomatic dialogue with countries such as Afghanistan, Egypt, DR Congo and Russia."

Comment: My answer is yes. To stand up for women's rights will always be part of Swedish foreign policy. This is exactly what we use diplomacy for.

e. "Knowledge and awareness: Sweden's diplomatic corps should work strategically on these matters and also undergo training so they have the right skills regarding these issues, and a specific manual should be developed, like the Norwegian Action plan for human rights defenders."

Comment: We already have a fantastic diplomatic corps, but I am willing to look into how awareness can be improved. I will definitely read the Norwegian Action Plan. We always feel a bit triggered when the Norwegians are moving ahead of us.

f. "Update EU guidelines: The EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders turns 10 this year. Kvinna till Kvinna suggest that Sweden should invite the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis. The purpose would be to update the guidelines with a gender perspective in accordance with UN General Assembly resolution "Protecting Women Human Rights".

Comment: I cannot make such a promise here, but the idea to invite Stavros Lambrinidis need to update the guidelines is noted. And in such a discussion I am sure that Asma Jahangir, who is here with us today, would have valuable comments.

\* \* \*

In addition, Kvinna till Kvinna have two proposals that I will need to reflect on further.

One is about security and the need for legislation to be reviewed and adapted to the new times we live in. As I mentioned earlier, much of the threats and violence against femdefenders today take place over the internet.

The second proposal regards the establishment of a system that could provide femdefenders with temporary visas and temporary residence permits. In addition, Kvinna till Kvinna propose that the Government should give the Migration Board the task of developing administrators' expertise. The focus should be on sexual violence and trafficking, but also the specific threat against women's rights defenders.

Again, I have noted the ideas and I look forward to discussing them further, both with you and with my colleagues in the Government.

\* \* \*

I started by saying that November might be dark in Sweden, and that we need to give each other hope. One person who can inspire us all is the Swedish feminist and author Elin Wägner. She once made a very accurate comparison that is also very fitting on a November morning. She compared values and ideals to old-fashion bicycle lights: They don't light up until you pedal forwards.

I will remember Wägner's words when I move forward in order to implement a feminist foreign policy. In all my work as a foreign minister, our policies must be built on the idea of gender equality. It's about having a foreign policy for 100 per cent of the world's population. It's about never accepting a world in which violence against women is the number one cause of death and disability among women.

So let's listen to Elin Wägner. November might be dark in Sweden, and developments in many parts of the world are worrying. Therefore we have to move on. Let us listen to our values and strive forward together.

In that way, millions of lights will light up the world.

Thank you.





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Annika Söder's address to the plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly on Palestine

Published 24 November 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

United Nations General Assembly 24 november 2014  
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Mr President,

Sweden fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union but would like to take the opportunity to make a few additional remarks.

Let me say upfront that the Swedish recognition of the State of Palestine aims at making the parties less unequal and to improve the prospects for a negotiated final status agreement. We are taking sides for peace, not for one party. And we are joining 134 other states.

Our decision is built on human rights and engagement in finding a peaceful solution since Count Bernadotte in the 1940s, our early contacts with PLO through Olof Palme and the, successful work with Egypt and Sweden to start a dialogue with the US and PLO in 1988. And the many Swedes that went to experience Kibbutz life in the 1960s and onwards. We have a longstanding relation with Israel.

Now, young people in both Palestine and Israel need to see that there are alternatives to violence. Our hope is that the recognition will strengthen constructive and moderate forces on both sides, will contribute to an end of the occupation and help to stop a development towards a one state reality.

It is critical times. The recent vicious circle of violence – the devastating Gaza war and the recent increase of provocations, violence and terrorist attacks in Jerusalem – is a painful warning signal of urgency. Sweden condemns the horrific terrorist attack on Jewish worshipers in Jerusalem last week. All actors have to unite to prevent the political conflict to turn into a spiral of violence with also religious dimensions. If not, the prospects of reaching a two-state solution that meets the aspirations of both parties would be gone. The lack of progress fuels new acts of violence in the immediate area, but also in the wider Middle East.

There are no acceptable excuses for provocations, terrorist attacks, rockets towards civilians or other violent actions. The Israeli settlement expansion, the demolitions, land confiscation, forcible transfer and resettlements in Palestine – which is not in accordance with international law – are making a negotiated final status agreement on a sustainable two state solution not only more difficult, but soon almost impossible.

The conditions in Gaza are unacceptable and unsustainable and a return to the situation before the Gaza war is not an option. Status quo means that the two-State solution is fading away during the rapid deterioration of the situation on the ground, both in Gaza and in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The borders of Gaza must be opened for construction material, goods and people. The trade possibilities must increase. The inhabitants of Gaza need to see immediate improvements of their living conditions so that they don't lose hope about the future and the faith in the international community.

Against this backdrop, the time has come for a more active involvement by the international community. The UN Security Council, the USA, the EU, the Arab League and the Quartet must assist the parties with clear parameters and with a defined time frame aimed at the realisation of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the conflict. The goal is that Israel and Palestine could live side by side in peace and security within recognised borders, based on the pre-1967 borders.

The international community has a responsibility to protect and to reassure constructive and moderate actors in Palestine, which adhere to non-violence, recognition of Israel, recognition of previous agreements. Sweden will certainly contribute.

On today's occasion it is high time to turn words into concrete actions on the

ground. At this moment it is important to support President Abbas, strengthen the Palestinian Authority and the Consensus government in the West Bank and in Gaza. Sweden has recently adopted a new five year development strategy for Palestine with a total amount of 200 million USD, an increase with 50 percent. Just this week we will deposit the annual contribution to the Palestinian Authority through the PEGASE-mechanism with an amount approximately of 6 million USD.

This year it is 65 years since UNRWA was established to support millions of Palestinians forced to flee their homes. Sweden has been, and will continue to be, one of the main supporters of UNRWA and this year we have contributed with approximately 50 million USD to the agency. We are proud to exercise the chairmanship of its AdCom.

Mr. President,

Let me end by saying that we expect both the Palestinian and Israeli leaderships to do their utmost to ensure that both peoples soon may live in prosperity, peace and security.

Only with peace can true and full security be obtained.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the High-Level Partnership Forum on Delivering Somalia's New Deal Compact

Published 19 November 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

High-Level Partnership Forum on Delivering Somalia's New Deal Compact, Copenhagen 19 november 2014  
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Mr President, Excellencies,

Thank you for bringing us together here today, and for setting the agenda through your opening statements.

Twenty years ago, I read an article in my local newspaper about eight refugee boys, orphans, from Somalia, arriving in my small town. I called the municipality and offered to be a contact family. Young Mohammed became our third boy in the family. We learned something about his sorrows and frustrations, his longing and hopes and love for his country. We also had an exotic exchange of experiences – of camels and skiing respectively.

No one describes the challenges Somalia faces better than you, President Mohamud. It is first and foremost the daily life of your citizens and the future of your country that are at stake. When we talk about the forming of a stable federal state, poverty reduction and social services delivery, it is the key tasks for you and your government that we are talking about. You have formulated your Vision 2016. We, as international partners, have provided sustained support and cooperation.

It is sometimes said that “the meeting is the message”. This is a meeting with a very clear message.

I have three points to make.

First: there is a need for clear, brave and determined political leadership, in order not to halt or reverse progress made. As in any country, political leadership is about listening, finding compromises and working together. It is about mobilising political will and rising above politics of personalities and advancing the interest of the citizens. No one can have their way in every single detail. But everyone can – and must – play their part in shaping a long-term political solution that ensures the unity, stability and prosperity of the country. We all know how difficult this can be. I hope that we can be of help to each other, and share each other’s experiences.

This is important for Somalia, but also for how we as partners engage with, and support, the Somali government’s priorities.

Time is not really on our side. The pace needs to accelerate if Vision 2016 is to be realised. The most critical laws must be passed and vital commissions set up. Schools, roads and hospitals must be built. Employment opportunities for Somali young people must be identified.

And – this is my second message – the voice of Somali women must be strengthened.

Women make up some 60 per cent of the population, but less than 10 per cent of parliamentarians at national and regional levels in Somalia. A young girl in Somalia today is less likely to go to school than her brother. Even if she – and not her brother – is the one with the better business skills or more talent, her capacity is less likely to be utilised to its full potential. This is a waste of human resources that no society can afford. And it is a matter of fundamental human rights that no country can ignore. I am encouraged by all the work that has already started.

We need to see an end to women and girls in Somalia being socially, economically and politically discriminated against. We need an enhanced legal and social framework to tackle gender inequality. And we need to pay attention to the fight against gender-based violence.

There is no magic solution for tackling gender inequality. But it is my firm belief that without gender equality there is no sustainable solution to the long-term challenges in Somalia.



In other words: nothing about them without them. No women, no peace.

The third message I'd like to convey is one of support, and of cooperation.

Partners stand ready to continue to assist in building a sovereign and secure Somalia with democratic and inclusive political institutions. Coordination is, as always, key – and always complicated. The dialogue between all donors could be so much stronger. The international support to the Somali security sector and AMISOM needs to be sustained. Our development cooperation has to work faster and with more flexibility and creativity than usual. It needs to link in with humanitarian assistance and security and stabilisation efforts, and ensure that tangible support quickly reaches the population also outside Mogadishu, especially in newly recovered areas. In all of this, the UN is a key partner and we commend the leadership of the SRSG and the work of the integrated UN mission.

Sweden is ready to continue its substantial partnership with Somalia. It is a partnership of political engagement, development and security. The Swedish development cooperation in Somalia is long-term. Our support of USD 45 million per year is aimed at peace-building, job-creation, the strengthening of democratic institutions, health and private sector development. It focuses in particular on the needs of women and children. We have a substantial humanitarian assistance – USD 23 million last year.

And Sweden is supporting the strengthening of the Somali security sector, primarily through the EU missions on the ground and at sea. We are currently preparing for our fourth contribution to Operation Atalanta.

It is also a partnership of people. We have a significant Somali diaspora – nearly 60 000 people – in Sweden. They are an asset to us. Thank you, Mr President, for letting us benefit from the talent and experience of your citizens. And they are, of course, an asset to you. There ought to be more effective ways of harnessing their strong capacity and willingness to engage.

And it is a partnership for seeing opportunities. In June, we held a Somali trade and investment conference in Stockholm on the role of private actors in state-building and job-creation. Some 150 participants came to explore the emerging business opportunities. We are now looking into ways of supporting diaspora investments in Somalia.

Friends,

My message has been threefold: political leadership, a stronger voice for the women of Somalia, and coordinated and long-term international support.

What is at stake here is – of course – the future of Somalia, but also the possibility of being a shining international example. Strong national institutions, determined people and a committed international community have pushed Somalia forward in a way few believed to be possible only a few years ago. A failed state with the potential of becoming a great success story and a source of inspiration and hope for many societies affected by conflict and crisis.

So let's make sure – through brave and determined efforts – that this is the story of Somalia that will be remembered.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech at United Nations Association of Sweden seminar ahead of United Nations Day

Published 22 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

United Nations Association of Sweden seminar ahead of  
United Nations Day, Stockholm Concert Hall 22 oktober  
2014

NB. Check against delivery.

Friends of the UN,

Picture a school chemistry lesson in Birmingham. A 17 year-old girl from Pakistan receives the news that she has won the Nobel Peace Prize. On the same day, she gives a speech at the Library of Birmingham. She has to stand on a box to be able to see her audience from the high podium. But she waited until the end of the school day to speak. Attending all the day's lessons was more important than anything else.

From the library's rostrum, Malala dedicates the prize to all those children who are voiceless. Her fight against violence and for girls' right to education spreads hope, energy and warmth.

She is the greatest threat to the Taliban: a girl with a book!

Malala shares the prize with Indian child rights activist Kailash Satyarthi, who is held to be maintaining the tradition of Gandhi. In response to a direct question, the Norwegian Nobel Committee acknowledged that the choice of laureates also sends a signal against extremism and violence in the Middle East. A violence exemplified by extremist group ISIL's atrocious offences.

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Friends of the UN,

In the Statement of Government Policy, the Prime Minister emphasised that we want to see a strong and reformed UN. The United Nations must regain and develop its place in Swedish foreign policy. The capacity of the UN system to tackle peace- and state-building still needs to be strengthened. As supporters of the UN, we will also set high requirements for the efficiency, transparency and functionality of the UN.

If peace and security are to reach the most vulnerable, the UN's peace support operations and UN development assistance must go hand in hand. Lasting peace is built from the bottom up. It must involve everyone.

Promoting and respecting international law and human rights are key priorities for the Swedish cooperation government. This is one of many aspects of our UN engagement that are firmly established.

I would like to begin by calling attention to Sweden's candidacy for the UN Security Council for the period 2017–2018. The Security Council is a unique platform that offers the opportunity to disseminate Swedish peace policy, influence the course of global politics and pursue our agenda. Over the last two weeks we have shifted our candidacy up a gear. It has Nordic support and is now being pursued by the Government with full force.

\* \* \*

Today, I would also like to take the opportunity to expand on the agenda for our engagement in the UN. It can be summed up in four points.

- Peace.
- Social equality.
- Gender equality.
- Sustainability.

These timeless concepts will guide our work, and I would like to say a few words about how we will fill out these fine-sounding words with concrete actions.

Of course, they all hang together – we know that. No peace without gender equality, no sustainability without peace, and no gender equality without social equality. In the words of Olof Palme, we share a common destiny.

\* \* \*

First peace.

Let me start with our own neighbourhood. Russia's annexation of Crimea is a clear breach of international law. Sweden, together with the EU and the rest of the international community, has a great responsibility to counter violations of Ukraine's territorial integrity, violations of its sovereignty and destabilisation of the country.

At the same time, we must support Ukraine's own reform efforts. In light of developments, Sweden's contribution to operations in Eastern Europe will increase.

Sweden contributes substantially to the OSCE's special monitoring mission, which carries out independent monitoring of the situation in Ukraine and works with conflict prevention. Sweden also contributes to the Delegation of the EU in Kiev.

Sweden also plans to make a considerable staff contribution to the new EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform in Ukraine. And of course: we will continue to stand up for international law, and assert Ukraine's right to independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

\* \* \*

And so I would like to move on to today's theme, the situation in Syria and Iraq and the threat from ISIL.

First, it must once again be emphasised that this is a matter of human rights, and of solidarity between people. The Government has condemned ISIL and its ruthless actions in no uncertain terms. Reports indicate serious, systematic and extensive abuses of human rights and breaches of international humanitarian law.

Murder, torture and rape are taking place on a large scale. These heinous actions, directed at the civilian population, may constitute crimes against humanity. Those responsible must be held accountable.

Now, we must do two things in parallel. We must tackle the immediate crisis, and work in the longer term for a political solution.

To tackle the immediate crisis, Sweden's primary contribution is our

humanitarian assistance to those affected. Since 2011, we have contributed more than SEK 1.3 billion to help people on the ground.

In the next few days, an additional Swedish contribution of more than SEK 100 million will follow as we earmark parts of our core support to the World Food Programme for Syria. We have also taken in more than 55 000 asylum seekers from Syria, more than any other EU country.

The only way forward in Syria that is sustainable in the long term is to bring about a political process and solution. Since the conflict began in 2011, Sweden and the EU have been working in this direction. Efforts have been undertaken in close cooperation with former UN Special Representative for Syria Lakhdar Brahimi. They will continue under the new Special Representative, Staffan de Mistura, with whom I spoke very recently.

The regime has also continued to commit grave human rights abuses. More than 200 000 people, including 135 000 civilians, have been killed.

The UN Security Council and various UN bodies have an important role to play. Naturally, Sweden will act in and through the UN to contribute to political solutions. We welcome the adoption by the Security Council of three resolutions in the fight against ISIL. We would like to see a continuation of concerted action.

But at the same time, we regret that Russia is blocking the Security Council from acting to bring an end to the conflict in Syria. This illustrates yet again that the Security Council needs to be reformed, a task to which Sweden is keen to contribute.

\* \* \*

The proposals and instruments mentioned by the United Nations Association of Sweden in an opinion piece today – for example the UN ‘Uniting for Peace’ mechanism – are interesting. It is important to embrace openness and take stock of the entire UN toolbox when situations are urgent.

It is also important to put the problem of ISIL in context. Without a solution to the wider conflict in Syria, it will be impossible to successfully combat ISIL. I have noted the proposals in the article, and I welcome the debate. But to move forward there must be broad-based support. We are not there yet.

\* \* \*

We know that the conflict between Israel and Palestine has a major impact on international peace and security. The conflict can only be resolved through a two-state solution, negotiated in accordance with the principles of international law. It must guarantee the legitimate demands of both the Palestinians and the Israelis for national self-determination and security.

A two-state solution requires mutual recognition and a will to coexist peacefully. Sweden will therefore recognise the State of Palestine.

\* \* \*

As we are talking about peace, I also want to raise the need for, and importance of, UN operations. With our contribution to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali, MINUSMA, Sweden is beginning its first substantial contribution to a peace support operation run by the UN since the operation in Liberia in 2006.

Our contribution in Mali will encompass around 250 people, and is expected to be fully operational in the first quarter of 2015.

Sweden's commitment to UN peace support activities is nothing new. More than 80 000 Swedes have taken part in UN peace support operations over the years. This is a proud tradition that the new Swedish Government wants to continue.

Of course, our engagement in UN peace support activities is not only military in nature. We also contribute civilian personnel – police officers, advisers and prison officers – to a range of UN operations around the world, including in South Sudan, Afghanistan, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Middle East. We will continue this work.

\* \* \*

And so to social equality.

In today's world it is often the economic and social gaps rather than purely military tensions that cause armed conflict.

For this reason, efforts to combat poverty in the world are crucial. The Swedish one per cent target for international development cooperation provides a very tangible illustration of our solidarity with people throughout the world fighting poverty.

Sweden will engage in the work on the UN's new development goals, the post-2015 agenda. Along with the Minister for International Development Cooperation, I will return to this subject on another occasion. But allow me to emphasise here and now that one dimension of social inequality is when people have to work in unacceptable conditions.

Take the example of the textile factory in a high-rise block in Bangladesh that had no emergency exits when a fire broke out. The fire forced workers to their deaths jumping out of windows several stories up.

Poverty must be combated by promoting both work and decent working conditions. The rights of workers must be guaranteed. Through the UN and the international financial institutions, rules for work can be created and effective employment policy encouraged.

Free trade unions and human rights in working life are crucial in the fight against poverty.

\* \* \*

Gender equality is the third point on our UN agenda.

The role of women is a particular priority. In UN activities, Sweden must be perceived as a clear feminist voice, and as a strong partner for gender equality. We must be leaders in the fight for women's and girls' rights.

Sweden will take a holistic approach to global gender equality issues. From financial and political empowerment to the right to decide over their own bodies and sexuality, via women's role in conflicts and peacebuilding, and fighting all forms of violence against women and girls.

This will be a tough task in the hardened international climate, in which unholy alliances are often formed between conservative forces to minimise women's power and influence. But we will not give in. Women have a right to power, life and security.

As friends of the UN, you probably know that I cannot fail to mention Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820. The reasons are obvious. Women's role in peace processes is crucial to achieving peace. Sexual violence in war and conflict must be highlighted and fought.

I want to contribute my experience of working on the role of women in war – and in the building of peace.



\* \* \*

The fourth point on our UN agenda is sustainability.

I returned yesterday from the EU General Affairs Council in Luxembourg, where climate change was discussed. Ahead of the climate summit in Paris next year, the EU must take on a global leadership role. In this context, our shared destiny becomes unmistakable. Sweden will engage in the climate efforts of both the UN and the EU with political determination, knowledge and resources.

But sustainability is about both climate change and our common security – and ultimately, the survival of our planet. Disarmament and non-proliferation will form a large part of Sweden's engagement in the UN. The excessive supply and occurrence of weapons in today's world is not sustainable.

Last week we raised Sweden's profile on disarmament issues. In the General Assembly's First Committee, the Government announced that Sweden will participate in the Humanitarian Initiative, which points to the enormous humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. More than 150 countries back the initiative, and many of them have been waiting for Sweden to join. This has now finally taken place.

The illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons is the greatest everyday threat to human security. The UN's new Arms Trade Treaty can contribute to a more responsible arms trade. I welcome the fact that the issue of gender-based violence is included in the ATT.

Sweden will continue to work actively for disarmament with respect to B and C weapons. The use of chemical weapons in Syria is terrible, unacceptable – and prohibited. Sweden will continue its efforts against these weapons.

And I want to spell it out: Sweden wants to abolish all nuclear weapons, which is a principle that the 189 parties to the non-proliferation treaty have signed up to.

I also want to stress the following: life and death decisions cannot be delegated to machines. We have a duty to assess the legality of new weapons. We therefore look forward to continued discussions on autonomous weapon systems, taking the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons as a starting point.

\* \* \*

Friends of the UN,

Sweden's long-standing and strong support to the United Nations has earned us respect in the international community. We want to carry on this tradition. This is why we have a clear UN agenda. For peace, social equality, gender equality and sustainability.

The special status of the UN in Sweden – among the Swedish public, higher education institutions, popular movements and civil society – must be safeguarded. That is why it was important to me to come here today. I will try to take every opportunity that may contribute to greater popular support for foreign policy.

\* \* \*

In her speech in Birmingham, Malala said that when she was younger, her dream was to be a doctor. But now she has decided to be a politician.

I look forward to Malala's company – and that of new generations of young politicians – as we together shape the answer to one of the most important questions of our time: how the UN, our most important global actor, is to be used to manage the common destiny of the world's citizens.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Address at The Cairo Conference on Palestine - Reconstructing Gaza

Published 12 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

The Cairo Conference on Palestine - Reconstructing Gaza, Cairo 12 oktober 2014 Please check against delivery.

Excellencies, friends,

A six year-old girl in Gaza has experienced three wars during her lifetime. During the course of a few short weeks this past summer, more than 500 children died. Families were torn apart. Schools were destroyed. The hopes and aspirations of young Palestinians - the generation of the future - were once again crushed.

Now, arms seem to have come to rest again.

We need to keep it that way, through determined diplomatic and political efforts, and through substantial economic support. My country is trying to do both.

The Government of Sweden will recognise the State of Palestine.

Some say this announcement is premature - that it will make the peace process more difficult. Our own worry is rather the opposite - that it might be too late.

The peace process is stalled. Facts on the ground are rapidly changing and will soon render a two-state solution not only more difficult, but almost impossible.

There really is no time to waste. Our recognition aims at making the parties to the conflict less unequal. It aims at supporting moderate Palestinians, providing a positive injection into the dynamics of the Middle East Peace Process, and sending a clear and convincing signal to younger generations that there is an alternative to violence and an alternative to the status quo.

Sweden firmly believes that a negotiated two-state solution that guarantees the legitimate aspirations of both peoples in terms of security and national self-determination remains the solution.

We commend the impressive state-building efforts and reforms undertaken by the Palestinian Authority - often under very difficult circumstances. The Palestinian Authority has state-readiness. This has been recognised by the international community.

But recognition also means responsibility. Just as we have expectations on Israel - and they have been clearly voiced, including by the EU - we also have expectations on Palestine, not least since there is a willingness to continue reforms, and to have a strong and well-functioning consensus government in place. We expect the Palestinian government to fight corruption and nepotism, to guarantee respect for civil and political rights, to create opportunities for public participation and accountability, and to increase the political influence of women.

And we expect it - as well as the Government of Israel - to do everything to ensure that both peoples can live in peace and security. This cannot be done through bombs or rockets, war or violence, humiliation or threats. Genuine security can only be achieved through peace.

The consensus government in itself is a confirmation of the unity of the whole of Palestine: the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza. They belong together, and they should be physically linked to each other, with Gaza as a window to the sea. This fact should be a guiding star for the international community in our aid to Palestine.

The focus today is on the people of Gaza.

The war made an already critical situation worse, generating immense needs: housing, infrastructure, schools and medical relief. To meet these needs, and to facilitate the development of a sustainable economy, the policy of the closure of Gaza must come to an end. Restrictions must be lifted. Mechanisms for import and - perhaps even more importantly - export are

crucial conditions for economic development, state-building and basic services delivery. I welcome the constructive engagement of Israel in the establishment of the tripartite agreement to allow imports of construction material to Gaza. It is a small but important first step towards opening the borders.

The Swedish Government will soon adopt a new five-year plan for its development assistance to Palestine. It will focus on state-building, environment, climate and sanitation as well as private sector development. It will aim at creating conditions for women to enjoy their rights, shape political decisions and participate fully in the economy. And it will increase already the significant Swedish support to Palestine. Swedish annual assistance to the Palestinians amounts to over USD 100 million, including USD 40 million in core funding of UNRWA. This year USD 20 million has been assigned to humanitarian aid to Gaza. Today, I can announce that Sweden has decided to contribute an additional USD 10 million to Gaza in humanitarian and development support.

Palestinians need our solidarity and our long-term support to live on their land in dignity and peace.

We must not lose track of the real goal: a negotiated two-state solution and an end to the occupation.

We should all realise that giving people hope for a better life is a strategic way to obtain sustainable peace.

We owe this to the children of Gaza.

Thank you.



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# The Stockholm Ministerial Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament and the Non-Proliferation Treaty

Published 11 June 2019

## Ministerial declaration, Stockholm, 11 June 2019.

We, the participating states – Argentina, Canada, Finland, Ethiopia, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland – to the Stockholm Ministerial Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), met today to discuss how nuclear disarmament can be advanced.

We are one year away from the 50th anniversary of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The treaty has been undisputedly successful in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, laying the foundation for significant reductions in nuclear arsenals and facilitating the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It has also established an international safeguards system and fostered the creation of nuclear-weapon free zones. Notwithstanding those successes, the role of nuclear weapons has been increasing recently against the background of a deteriorating international security environment.

Qualitatively new capabilities are being developed, spurred on by new technology. The gradual downward trend of the global nuclear arsenal, from its peak in 1986, should not be reversed. A potential nuclear arms race – which would serve no one's interest – must be avoided.

Regional proliferation challenges add further complexity to the state of affairs. Our firm objective remains the denuclearization of the DPRK in a

complete, verifiable and irreversible manner in accordance with all relevant UNSC resolutions. Meanwhile, the multilaterally endorsed nuclear deal with Iran (JCPOA) – a key achievement of the global non-proliferation regime – is in a precarious state.

We reaffirm our support for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East, in line with the 1995 Resolution and the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

With its near universal membership, the NPT has been indispensable for global peace and security for five decades. Together we must ensure the future of this landmark treaty. In less than a year from now, States Parties will gather in New York to review the implementation of the NPT and chart the way forward. The Review Conference offers us an opportunity to deliver upon our collective commitments and, in particular, work towards advancing implementation of the disarmament pillar. We should seize that chance and contribute to breaking the deadlock.

Our governments will do their utmost to this end. From different regions and security contexts, we are united in our belief that constructive political and diplomatic engagement is essential to build the trust necessary for progress towards our shared goals.

The high-level meeting of the UN Security Council on 2 April showed unified and strong support for the NPT, which was further expressed in an agreed press statement.

Emphasising the mutually reinforcing character of the three pillars of the NPT, we stress the necessity of further progress on the disarmament pillar.

Contributing to such efforts will be our focus in the year ahead. Our approach will be ambitious yet realistic. We seek in 2020 an outcome that reaffirms the role of the NPT as the cornerstone of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It should give real meaning to this by identifying stepping stones for the implementation of Article VI of the Treaty, building on the commitments made during a series of Review Conferences, notably in 1995, 2000 and 2010.

Recognising the highly challenging character of the global security environment, our discussions today covered a wide range of issues, including more transparent and responsible declaratory policies, measures to reduce

the role of nuclear weapons in doctrines and policies, ways of enhancing transparency and of reducing risks of any use of nuclear weapons, strengthened negative security assurances, work on nuclear disarmament verification and the importance of addressing the production of fissile material.

All these areas offer concrete opportunities to reduce international tensions and improve global security. They could provide us with important stepping stones, as confidence-building measures, that pave the way for further progress in the years to come. In this context, we noted that the extension of the New START would be a key contribution to preserving strategic stability.

Our efforts are also a response to the United Nations Secretary General's call to bring disarmament and non-proliferation back to the top of the international political agenda.

Moving forward, our governments – building on the Stockholm Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament and the NPT – will be reaching out to the wider NPT community. It will be of particular importance to work with the nuclear weapon states, whose full commitment and constructive engagement will be essential for success in 2020. Our shared goal is a world free of nuclear weapons.





Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Communiqué at Ministerial Strategic Dialogue on UNRWA on 12 April in Stockholm

Published 12 April 2019

Foreign Ministers H.E Margot Wallström of Sweden and H.E Ayman Safadi of Jordan hosted a ministerial strategic dialogue in Stockholm today to discuss sustainable ways to support the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Participants included representatives from 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 Pierre Krähenbühl, who presented UNRWA's continued vital programmes to assist over 5 million Palestinian refugees despite the financial challenges which the Agency faced in 2018.

Participants stressed that UNRWA's programmes are a critical component for regional development, stability and security in the interest of all. They emphasized the importance of these programmes in offering protection and vital development support to over 5.4 million Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, including east Jerusalem and Gaza.

Participants expressed appreciation for all partners who helped the agency to overcome its budget deficit last year, thus ensuring that UNRWA was able to

maintain the educational, health, relief and key development services to refugees.

Participants support the Agency's call for a renewed international commitment for 2019, which will show once again that political and financial support is key to regional and international stability. UNRWA serves such an important objective through sustaining hope among Palestine refugees by running schools for over half a million boys and girls, 8.5 million primary health care consultations and life-saving emergency assistance to 1.5 million Palestinian refugees affected by conflict and humanitarian crisis, particularly in Gaza and Syria.

Participants discussed which concrete measures could be taken to raise international awareness about UNRWA's vital role and operations, including in regional groups and high-level international meetings.

Participants underlined that UNRWA must continue to operate in fulfilment of its UN mandate until a durable and just solution to the refugees issue is found in accordance with relevant UN resolutions, including resolution 194, and within the context of a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the two-state solution.

Participants also agreed to invite all donors to actively support UNRWA, notably through multiyear financial commitment and core financing, to help the Agency bridge the 2019 funding gap and ensure sustainable financial support in 2020 and beyond.

Participants concur that high-level events, such as the pledging conference in New York in June, and an extraordinary ministerial event at UN General Assembly opening session in September, should urge partners to step up their commitment to the wellbeing of Palestine refugees and to their human development, primarily by ensuring that all UNRWA programmes continue uninterrupted.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Joint statement from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in France and from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Sweden

Published 08 March 2019

Today - on the International Women's Day - the Government of France and the Government of Sweden are proud to announce our joint decision to develop a common strategy for combating human trafficking for sexual exploitation in Europe and globally.

Trafficking is a grave human rights violation of which the majority of detected victims are women and girls. The majority of them are being trafficked for sexual exploitation. The overall number of victims has drastically increased in tandem with the unprecedented rise in irregular migration and forced displacements, notably as result of armed conflict, persecution or human rights violations. War, lack of economic opportunity, discrimination and gender-based violence further expose vulnerable individuals to abuse, particularly in situations where erosion of the rule of law allows traffickers to operate with impunity.

France and Sweden are both committed to fostering comprehensive inter-agency strategies and action plans in their own countries to tackle the challenge of human trafficking as well as to develop international cooperation in this area. The two Governments confirm their intention to support the “Blue Heart” international campaign awareness raising initiative to fight human trafficking and its impact on society and encourage all other States to join.

The main focus of our common strategy will be the need to reduce the demand for girls and women in prostitution, in Europe and globally. The reason for this is the clear nexus between trafficking for sexual exploitation and prostitution. A nexus that is well described in numerous studies and also highlighted by the European Parliament in resolution (2013/2103(INI)) on sexual exploitation and prostitution and its impact on gender equality. Trafficking for sexual exploitation will continue as long as there is a demand for girls and women in prostitution. Therefore, focusing on reducing demand will be an important measure for combating trafficking for sexual exploitation, for combating violence against women and children and for enhanced gender equality.

France and Sweden have taken a clear position against normalizing prostitution as work. Our view is that prostitution should always be perceived as an exploitation of someone's vulnerability – thus prostitution should never be considered a job. To consider prostitution as legal 'sex work', decriminalizing the sex industry in general and making procuring legal is not a solution to keeping women and children in vulnerable situations safe from violence and exploitation, but has the opposite effect and expose them to higher level of violence, while at the same time encouraging prostitution markets — and thus the number of women and children suffering abuse — to grow.

France and Sweden together with several other countries have introduced legislation where the purchase of sexual services constitutes the criminal act, not the services of a person in prostitution. The person in prostitution is instead offered assistance to exit prostitution. This type of legislation, that focus on the sex buyer, has proven effective both to diminish demand and to diminish prostitution. The results in Sweden, where the legislation has been in place for twenty years, are very positive; demand has decreased substantially, there are few people in prostitution and Sweden is considered a market of low interest for trafficking for sexual exploitation. In 2016 a regulation similar to the Swedish legislation was enacted in France, introducing the criminalization of the purchase of sex, the full decriminalization of persons in prostitution, and the creation of a nation-wide public exit, protection and assistance policy for victims of prostitution, pimping, procuring and trafficking. The French government firmly believes that this legislation will prove as effective in France as in Sweden.

The French legislation has recently been challenged but on the first of February this year the French Supreme Court validated the constitutionality of the law. At the same time a survey that was undertaken in France by Ipsos

showed that 78% of French people support the 2016 Act and that 74% of French people think that purchase of sex is a form of violence.

All countries in the world have agreed to do everything they can to achieve the goals in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Several goals target human trafficking, gender equality, sexual exploitation and violence against women and children. Both our countries are convinced that criminalizing the purchase of sex would be a very important step towards achieving these goals. We will therefore put this agenda in the forefront of our common advocacy for combating trafficking for sexual exploitation in Europe and globally.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs at UN Human Rights Council's 40th session

Published 27 February 2019

Geneva, 26 February 2019 Check against delivery

Thank you, Mr President, High Commissioner, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drafted, 70 years ago, there were only two women members of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

These were the celebrated Eleanor Roosevelt and the Indian writer and independence activist Hansa Mehta.

When the phrase “all men are brothers” was proposed, Mehta objected. She noted that this could be used by some to exclude women.

Instead, she insisted on an expression that recognised the equality of women and men, which resulted in the first article: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

Everywhere and always, all humans are entitled to equal rights.

Today – in a world where democracy and the rule of law are being contested and undermined across the globe – I think it is fair to ask: what happened?

This story about Hansa Mehta captures the three areas that will be the focus of my address today: firstly, democracy and its decline; secondly, women’s rights, and thirdly, the need for multilateral cooperation.

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Decline of democracy, freedom of expression, religion or belief

Mr President,

For the first time in decades, more of the world's people now live in countries with authoritarian tendencies than in countries making democratic progress.

Democracy means more than the right to vote in free and fair elections. A democratic society lets its citizens participate in policy making and political discussion. It safeguards their freedom of expression and opinion. It has a lively debate. It is socially and economically fair.

Today, researchers see a decline in all these dimensions of democracy. We can see it in our own country reports on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, which now cover 135 countries.

Strong-arm leaders are centralising political power and suppressing dissenting and minority voices. Parliamentary and judicial independence is being undermined in attempts to weaken checks and balances. Minorities and marginalised groups are being wrongfully blamed.

Human rights defenders, journalists and artists are being named enemies of the state and are suffering from threats, harassment and violence. In 2018, 321 defenders in 27 countries were killed for their work. This was the highest number ever recorded, according to data from Front Line Defenders. 53 journalists were murdered.

A number of Swedish citizens have been jailed or abused in other countries because of their opinions or beliefs. Sweden will never accept this. We continue to work for their release.

Our government has named the defence and promotion of democracy worldwide a top priority for our foreign policy.

This means that we will support democracy where ever it can grow, and be vocal when democracy is undermined.

It means standing up for the right to freedom of expression, opinion, political dissent, religion or belief.

And it means targeting the social and economic injustices that are making people lose faith in our democratic institutions.

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Women's rights

Mr President,

Secondly, as Hansa Metah pointed out, we cannot disregard half the population. Women's rights are human rights.

Five years ago, Sweden launched its feminist foreign policy. In everything we do, we ask whether women have the same rights, representation and resources as men.

Women and girls rarely have the same rights – to schooling, to work, to marry or divorce freely. They are rarely equally represented in decision making – in government, parliaments or businesses. And they rarely have access to the same resources, be they medical care, education or a fair share of state budgets.

I specifically want to mention women's sexual and reproductive health and rights. Unsafe abortions, birth complications or harmful practices such as female genital mutilation can lead to death. We must strengthen access to comprehensive sex education for all. And we must combat child, early and forced marriages.

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Multilateral cooperation

Mr President,

Thirdly, I want to raise the issue of multilateral cooperation.

It is essential that we defend multilateral institutions that monitor and report on human rights issues.

Sweden strongly supports this Council as the premier body for human rights issues that draws attention to serious human rights violations and protects and strengthens human rights. We will continue to defend the independence of the human rights system and urge all states to fully cooperate with the



Office of the High Commissioner and the mandate holders.

Human rights are a central element of international law. They are legal obligations and commitments undertaken by states. We must constantly counteract all attempts to weaken and relativise human rights and their universality. Human rights are not something to pick and choose from. Religion, customs or traditions are not excuses to undermine these rights.

We do not choose to promote democracy and human rights out of national self-interest, we do it because every individual should be entitled to govern their own future.

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Mr President,

Democracy, women's rights and respect for the multilateral order are indeed being challenged.

The trends are visible in many countries that are represented here today.

Let me encourage you to turn this development around.

Let us not fall into distrust and polarisation. Let us embrace diversity, and address these urgent matters together. Let us be self-confident enough to accept dissent and opposition. Let us unite in defence for democracy and human rights.

That is our responsibility – to present and future generations.

Thank you.



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Joint Declaration on Venezuela

Published 04 February 2019

On January 26th, various Member States urged Mr. Nicolás Maduro to take the necessary legal steps for democratic presidential elections to be announced within 8 days. On that same day, the EU High Representative / Vice President issued a statement on behalf of the 28 EU Member States, also calling for the urgent holding of free, transparent and credible presidential elections and indicating that, in the absence of an announcement on the organization of fresh elections with the necessary guarantees over the next days, the EU would take further actions, including on the issue of recognition of the country's leadership, in line with article 233 of the Venezuelan constitution.

Sweden along with Austria, Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom takes note that Mr. Nicolás Maduro has chosen not to set in motion the electoral process. Subsequently, and in accordance with the provisions of the Venezuelan Constitution, they acknowledge and support Mr. Juan Guaidó, President of the democratically elected National Assembly, as President ad interim of Venezuela, in order for him to call for free, fair and democratic presidential elections.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Margot Wallström, at the Geneva Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan 28 November 2018

Published 28 November 2018

I would like to begin by thanking the Government of Afghanistan and UNAMA for having organized this conference as an important political follow up to the successful donors' conference two years ago in Brussels. Today we have an opportunity to start turning the path of Afghanistan in a different, more peaceful and better direction.

One year ago, I visited Kabul and Herat. We met with people in the midst of conflict. I was struck by their continued struggle, day after day, to make ends meet. I was impressed that despite hardship and violence, they worked hard to strengthen their local communities. One small example: during our visit we were even invited to a very modest movie screening, showing that culture can endure even where people have limited means.

Next year will mark the 100th anniversary of independence for Afghanistan. Too many of these years have been filled with chaos and war.

A number of issues will be decisive for the future of the people of Afghanistan, in particular the young and hopeful.

First, the peace process. Sweden welcomes the renewed efforts towards a political settlement in Afghanistan. The invitation by President Ghani to talks without precondition is an important step forward. It should be supported.

But, peace is more than a political declaration. A successful peace process must include the fundamental role of the women of Afghanistan. Although some progress has been achieved in strengthening the role of women in Afghan society over the past 17 years, more needs to be done.

Second, the elections. Free and fair elections are essential parts of a democracy. The turnout in the recent elections seems to have been significant considering the security situation. By going to the polls, voters showed their commitment to democracy and desire for peace. But operational and organizational shortcomings were apparent and must be addressed.

Thirdly, progress in the reform process will be key to sustained development and the agenda is long. We are happy to see the anti-corruption framework improving but it needs implementation. The National Action Plan for SCR 1325 is moving on and needs to be integrated in national programs through the regular budget. Investments in health care and education have meant a lot to both girls and boys but more must be done. The expansion of education, especially empowering young girls, has a tremendous potential to make a positive long-term change for Afghanistan.

Finally, Sweden's development cooperation commitment is strong and long-term. Afghanistan is our single largest development partner and our present commitment extends through 2024. We have also increased our contribution to the humanitarian efforts and we have men and women participating in the Resolute Support Mission.

We will continue to be a good friend of Afghanistan and continue to support efforts towards a sustainable and inclusive development also after a peace agreement has been achieved – working together to make the next 100 years of Afghanistan brighter.

Thank you



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Joint statement by the five Nordic Foreign Ministers

Published 31 October 2018

We, the Foreign Ministers of the Nordic countries – Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland, and Denmark – met today in Oslo.

We have noted with great concern the information by our Danish colleague on the recent foiled assassination plot in Denmark by an Iranian intelligence agency. At this moment, we express our full solidarity with our Danish friends and partners.

We take the matter extremely seriously. Such activities are completely unacceptable.

We deplore any threat to Nordic security. It is important that the Nordic countries stand shoulder to shoulder, when faced with threats against our societies.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Swedish Statement at the UN Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security

Published 25 October 2018

National statement delivered by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on behalf of Sweden at the United Nations Security Council Open Debate on Women Peace and Security: Promoting Implementation of the WPS Agenda and Sustaining Peace through Women's Political and Economic Empowerment, 25 October 2018, New York.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, dear colleagues and friends,

Maybe you know that when the formal peace talks between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) opened in Havana, Cuba in November 2012, only one of the 20 negotiators around the table was a woman. A year later, civil society leaders organized a first-ever National Summit of Women and Peace and out of that summit came a clear demand for an inclusive peace process. Two years later women comprised 20 % of the government's negotiating team and 43 % of the FARC delegates.

So, what happened? By organizing themselves, these women contributed in crucial ways to the peacemaking effort, including by broadening the agenda. Women addressed some of the primary grievances of affected communities such as land restitution and the right to justice and reparation for victims. Women furthermore negotiated local cease-fires, and thereby improved the local security situations in towns and villages across the country.

In addition, because of demands by female negotiators and civil society, FARC undertook several confidence-building measures, such as an apology process and the release of child soldiers, which allowed the process to continue. This increased accountability. Finally, women built coalitions and rallied public support in favor of the peace talks. By repairing relations in communities affected by the conflict, women and civil society laid the groundwork for peace-building efforts necessary for the agreement's long-term success.

The peace agreement in Colombia is a model when it comes to inclusion. Women were key for success in the peace process, and their continued involvement will be key in the implementation of the peace process and for consolidating the peace.

Mr President and Mr Secretary General,

Thank you very much for your report, Secretary General. I think it made chilling reading partly, but it was also an enormous challenge put on us. I also thank you for your "to do list" that you presented here - the things to do for the UN system but also for us as Member States. I really hope that we will all bring it with us back home and start to implement it.

We welcome the focus on participation in this year's debate, and wish to thank Bolivia for putting emphasis on political inclusion and economic recovery. We also thank Randa Siniora Atallah, the Executive Director of UNWOMEN, and the Secretary General for all their valuable input.

Participation is not about counting heads but about having influence. About being recognized as party to the peace. About making sure that women's and men's situations are taken into consideration when making plans for the economy, for the infrastructure, for the justice system.

This is evident in the Sahel, where decreasing livelihood opportunities are directly linked to the risk of conflict, and women play a role as agents of change. I had the pleasure of visiting this region this summer together with distinguished colleagues from the UN and the African Union.

As you have heard already: in the Lake Chad region, where people are facing a food and nutrition crisis, we heard how the shrinking lake and growing insecurity have had severe consequences for people who

traditionally have sustained themselves by fishing activities. The fisher women we met in the village of Bol told us that they wished for only three things: bigger boats, better nets – and to not get raped.

Many of the women and girls we met had suffered from violence and inequalities, and are now seeking to use their experiences to transform societies and structures. We were encouraged to see that women were coming together in networks to address the challenges they face, including sexual and reproductive health and rights and access to basic social services.

Mr president,

The role women have played and continue to play in Colombia and the Sahel respectively demonstrate the very apparent need for including women in all aspects of decision-making, and how this in turn leads to more sustainable peace.

That is why we, as a member of this council, have consistently asked - where are the women? We will only ever be effective if we translate the women, peace and security agenda into concrete action and tailor responses to the specific situations on our agenda.

This has yielded results: All political and peacekeeping missions now have a Women, Peace and Security mandate. Discussions in the council are better informed, mandates are more precise, decisions are more inclusive and the number of CSO-briefers has increased considerably, leading to better input. In July, for the first time - but hopefully not the last – there was gender parity among briefers to the council.

However, agreements in the Security Council or advancements in our work do not automatically translate into changed realities on the ground. There needs to be a shift in mentality, a shift in analysis, and a shift in action.

First of all, making tangible progress requires ownership and accountability at the highest levels of leadership in the UN system as well as among us Member States. In the UN, Special Representatives and Special Envoys should be measured on how they implement and deliver on women, peace and security.

Second, the agenda must be taken seriously in the field. Senior gender expertise in political and peacekeeping mission should be strategically positioned.



Third, A gender dimension need always be taken into account throughout strategic planning processes in conflict contexts, and never become an add-on or an afterthought. Such approaches must permeate all sectors, whether military, police or civilian.

Fourth, missions must also step up efforts to engage with civil society, not least women's organizations.

Fifth, we need better analysis. Conflict analysis that inform decision making must include gender equality. Much work remains to make women's and men's situation visible in each setting. Gender disaggregated data in reporting from the field should be a minimum, including in the reports to this council.

Sixth, and last, peacekeeping and political mission budgets must be gender responsive. We have shared more detailed recommendations on all of these aspects with the Secretary General.

Mr President,

We still witness too many peace processes where the absence of women is apparent. This should no longer be accepted. I have realized that there are four myths on gender in peace mediation that we need to dispel once and for all.

The first myth is that there are distinct 'women's issues'. While conflict affects women and men differently, that does not mean that certain topics are relevant for one gender only.

The second myth is that peace process starts at the negotiating table. Women are usually invited when formal talks are already convened, long after pre-negotiations, consultations and agenda-setting have already started. In the earlier phases, a broad range of perspectives about the drivers of conflict and peace are most needed.

The third myth is that mediation is "political magic in smoky rooms", or as somebody said "men in fancy hotels". Mediation is not some political game played by charismatic, mysterious personalities. Such narrow view of mediation risk closing the door to many skillful women.

A group of people that challenge this myth are in the audience today: the representatives from five regional women mediator's networks. They bring incredible experiences as negotiators, mediators, political decision makers,

civil society leaders and experts and must be recognized and drawn upon by the UN and member states.

The fourth myth is that we need more evidence. Women frequently need to justify their participation by presenting evidence of the benefits of women's participation. Male counterparts never have to do that. Women should be able to participate simply because it is their right.

I believe that inclusion of women mediators from all around the world will change the dynamics of peace processes.

Finally Mr president,

No woman needs to be “given a voice”. Everyone has a voice. What is needed is more listening. Sweden had the pleasure of hosting the first ever multi stakeholder Forum on WPS earlier this week, where security council members had the opportunity to listen to more than 50 civil society representatives. Among the many themes that were raised, representatives from civil society stressed the need for addressing root causes, investing in protection of human rights defenders, and addressing gender equality within economic recovery efforts. They also called on the Security Council to act as a role model, and as an “influencer” within the system.

Mr President,

Empowering women and increasing women's political participation is one of the most effective tools for advancing global peace and security. It's also a prerequisite for preventing sexual and gender based violence, which sadly still affects an appalling number of women every day. We salute the heroic efforts of Nadia Murad and Denis Mukwege, the winners of the Nobel Peace prize 2018, who treat, speak up for, and seek justice for women who fall victim to such violence. Their work, as well as the work of thousands of activists, peacebuilders and women human rights defenders around the world should be an inspiration to us all.

In conclusion, let me pose a challenge to all of you ahead of 2020. In two years' time, Security Council Resolution 1325 will turn 20. By then, we need to ensure that the commitments we have made matter. Let us collectively pledge – politically and financially - to ensure that the agenda becomes a priority and a reality.

I thank you for your attention.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Swedish Statement at the UN Security Council Briefing on North Korea

Published 27 September 2018

National statement delivered by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on behalf of Sweden at the United Nations Security Council Briefing on non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 27 September 2018, New York.

Thank you, Mr President,

Dear colleagues, as I believe you all vividly remember, when world leaders gathered here in New York for the General Assembly one year ago, tensions on the Korean peninsula were alarmingly high and dangerous.

Since then positive, historic progress has been made and we now have a new momentum. But substantial challenges remain, and as much as we would like it, this is neither a quick nor a simple process, and it will take time. Unity of this Council has been decisive for the progress made so far, and continued unity will be critical. Your personal engagement, Secretary Pompeo, is very important, and we thank you for that.

Mr President,

The Security Council has shown strong resolve regarding the situation on the Korean peninsula, adopting numerous substantial resolutions by consensus. Sweden has contributed to these efforts, including by consistently pushing for diplomatic solutions. Our resolve must now be geared towards making further progress with a two-pronged approach.

Firstly, we need to effectively implement the existing sanctions until the demands of this Council are met. There are widespread violations of the sanctions regime in a range of areas, including arms exports, petroleum trade and financial transactions. We call on all Member States to fulfil their obligations and ensure full implementation.

There is no doubt that the responsibility for the dire humanitarian situation in the DPRK fundamentally rests with its government. At the same time, there are concerns about indirect negative impact of sanctions. Enhanced efforts are therefore needed to ensure that the humanitarian exemptions are safeguarded. A generation of North Koreans must not be lost due to malnutrition and lack of medicines.

Secondly, we must continue to encourage and support diplomatic efforts. Progress in the inter-Korean dialogue is very encouraging. Important agreements, including most recently at the summit in Pyongyang last week, have been achieved.

The summit between the United States and the DPRK in Singapore in June was indeed significant. All parties must now work to maintain momentum, and build trust and confidence. A step-by-step approach is needed to achieve complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation. For the DPRK, this means translating its commitments into concrete undertakings without delay. It is important that the IAEA is given a role early in the process.

Creative diplomacy will continue to be critical. The parties should explore ways to move from the armistice towards a peace agreement. The need for regional collaborative arrangements, including on security, as we've heard others say here, is evident.

An international framework that deals with all different aspects and can contribute to sustainability is essential. We welcome the support of the UN Secretary-General and the UN system. My country, with its presence in Pyongyang and as a longstanding member of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, the NNSC, will continue to assist diplomatic efforts.

Mr President,

The situation on the Korean peninsula has far-reaching implications for

international peace and security. It is also vital for good neighbourly relations in North East Asia. Recent progress has shown that it is possible to diffuse tensions through dialogue and cooperation. This should be recognised by the Security Council, and the newfound opportunity should be seized. We must now work together and stay united towards a peaceful, prosperous and nuclear-weapons-free Korean peninsula.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Swedish Statement at the UN Security Council Briefing on Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

Published 26 September 2018

National statement delivered by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, on behalf of Sweden, at the United Nations Security Council Briefing on Maintenance of international peace and security: non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, 26 September 2018, New York.

Madam President,

After listening to all countries around this table I hear support that multilateral and diplomatic solutions are urgently needed to address the challenges of today. International peace and security, and preventing conflict and terrorism, is rightly high on our agenda.

I therefore thank you, Madam President, for convening this important meeting on non-proliferation.

Madam President,

We have been asked to comment on four themes in this briefing - sanctions efficiency, capacity to implement, non-state actors, and weapons of mass destruction.

I think that the answer to all these four issues is close multilateral cooperation.

The world would certainly be a much more dangerous place without the existing treaties and agreements of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Yet, that multilateral framework for non-proliferation and disarmament depends on our continuous commitment to collective solutions.

In many parts of the world we see modernization of nuclear weapons arsenals, increased missile capacities, the threat of chemical weapons use and a normalization in the rhetoric surrounding all weapons of mass destruction – history has shown us too many times that such steps forms a pathway to catastrophe.

The nuclear weapons states bear a particular responsibility in upholding and making good on the commitment inherent in the NPT of a nuclear weapons-free world. To this end the review conference in 2020 must pave the way for enhanced disarmament and non-proliferation commitments. Equally, Sweden reiterates the call on all States to sign and ratify the CTBT.

Madam President,

The NPT is the common tool towards disarmament and non-proliferation but let me today also focus on three specific issues - the challenges to the Iran nuclear agreement, the DPRK's development of nuclear weapons, and the recurring use of chemical weapons.

First, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Iran deal, is a historic achievement. It is a concrete example of effective diplomatic non-proliferation efforts. This agreement prevents nuclear proliferation in Iran, but also aims to avoid ripple effects in the region. As the IAEA confirms, Iran continues to fulfill its nuclear obligations under the agreement. As long as that is the case, the JCPOA effectively curtails Iran's ability to develop nuclear weapons.

This is why Sweden, together with the rest of the EU, deeply regrets the

United States' unilateral withdrawal from the agreement – a decision with far-reaching consequences that makes our world more unsafe. And frankly, what are the alternatives to this agreement?

In undercutting a concrete multilateral non-proliferation tool, it dangerously undermines our joint non-proliferation efforts elsewhere.

Together with our EU partners, we will try to mitigate the adverse effects of the US policies. Sweden, and the rest of the EU, will continue to foster broad relations and dialogue with Iran, including on issues such as human rights. Iran's role in the region and missile activities are clearly a matter of concern. These concerns can and should however be addressed separately and not at the expense of the JCPOA. Security in the Middle East region can only be achieved through diplomatic solutions and enhanced cooperation, not through further polarization and isolation.

Remember we have tried this before, for decades isolation has been tried and it does not work.

Secondly, the DPRK's nuclear weapons program has been a major threat to the global non-proliferation regime. Recent diplomatic efforts deserve our full and active support. The continued progress in the Inter-Korean dialogue is very encouraging, and the summit between the United States and the DPRK in Singapore in June was indeed significant. All parties must now work to maintain momentum and take positive steps.

For the DPRK this means that commitments must be translated into legally binding undertakings. The IAEA should be given a role early in the verification of the denuclearization and disarmament process.

The Security Council and the international community must continue to stand united.

Thirdly, the use of chemical weapons is a serious violation of international law. Every violation undermines established norms and risk eroding the international taboo on these weapons. This is a very serious and worrisome development. The use of chemical weapons is morally abhorrent and can never be accepted.

In Syria, the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism has confirmed that chemical weapons were used repeatedly by the Syrian Arab Republic and by Da'esh. We supported the decision to task the OPCW to identify the



perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. While a mechanism established by this Council would have been preferable, the issue was too important to be allowed to be blocked. This does however not free this Council from its responsibility to ensure that those responsible are held to account.

In Salisbury a targeted murder was attempted using a nerve agent. Such assaults are absolutely unacceptable, and we call on Russia to fully cooperate with the investigations.

Madam President,

We must never lose sight of why we are making the efforts to eliminate these horrific weapons. Until now we have not talked about the victims. I have myself met with survivors of nuclear weapons attacks and I will never forget their stories. Victims of chemical weapons have shared similarly accounts. It is important to listen to such personal experiences to understand what it is we are fighting for. It has strengthened my resolve to step up efforts for non-proliferation and disarmament.

Weapons of Mass Destruction is clearly a global threat that we must address together. Only through multilateral solutions, including by this Council, can we effectively prevent the use of these repugnant weapons. The multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament framework is also a key pillar of the international rules-based order. We owe this to the survivors and victims of past attacks, and we owe it to future generations.

Thank you madam president.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Humanitarian disaster in Idlib must be avoided

Published 05 September 2018

## Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström

The conflict in Syria is one of the greatest humanitarian catastrophes of our time. Hundreds of thousands of people have died, and more than half of the country's population has been forced to flee since the start of the conflict in 2011. Time and again, the Syrian regime has shown that it is prepared to go to any lengths to force the population into submission, without any respect for human life and suffering.

This year, we have seen how the de-escalation areas, which were agreed upon by the Astana guarantors (Iran, Russia and Turkey) have been recaptured one at a time by the regime and its allies, with enormous humanitarian consequences as a result. Much now indicates that the regime is preparing a large scale military offensive against Idlib, the last remaining de-escalation area.

The Astana guarantors have failed to deliver on their promise – a de-escalation of the violence in Syria. It is high time they lived up to their commitments. At their meeting in Tehran on Friday, they must find a way to avoid further escalation.

As the UN Secretary-General stated, protection of civilians in Syria must now be given priority and a peaceful solution must be reached. The UN and the Security Council must take preventive action to avoid a new humanitarian disaster in Syria. Civilians must be protected from the effects of war, in accordance with the parties' obligations under the rules of international humanitarian law.

Sweden and Kuwait share the responsibility as co-penholders in the UNSC for the humanitarian situation in Syria. Together, we are now doing everything in our power to try to protect the estimated 3 million people in Idlib. We know from previous experience that this is a very difficult task, but we are prepared to take our responsibility.

**Margot Wallström**

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the UNSC Debate on Climate-Related Security Risks

Published 11 July 2018

National statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden Margot Wallström, on behalf of Sweden, at the United Nations Security Council Debate on Climate-Related Security Risks, 11 July 2018, New York.

Madam Deputy-Secretary-General, Ministers, Distinguished colleagues,

I am honored to chair today's debate on climate related security risks. I am a bit taken by the previous speaker, and I really thank the briefers for their statements this morning. Their testimonies, although from different perspectives, say one thing: the security risks associated with climate change are real. Minister Janabi has told of how Iraq is grappling with harsh weather conditions and intense droughts that will affect the country's fragile security. Hindu Oumarou Ibrahim has vividly described the challenges facing pastoralists in the Lake Chad Basin as ecosystems, and with them also old power-structures, shift.

Let me also thank the speakers representing groups of affected countries who will share their experience with us. A special thank you to His Excellency President Baron Waqa of Nauru, for being here today.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Last week, I met with these women and men who are dealing first-hand with the everyday consequences that a changing climate is having on peace and

security. They are migrants and refugees displaced as a result of drought or floods. They are the breadwinners no longer able to feed their families because, much like Lake Chad itself, their traditional fishing or farming livelihoods have evaporated, giving rise to tensions.

They are women leaders working in their communities to prevent youth from becoming victims of radicalization by groups that prey on the vulnerable. They do not have a choice to ignore these realities; neither do we.

And, the link between climate and security continues to be a priority for Sweden on this Council.

It is time for the Security Council to catch up with the changing reality on the ground. It's been seven years since we last debated climate and security.

And, it is past time for us to deepen our understanding of how climate change interacts with drivers of conflict. I will be practical. I believe there are four areas that needs to be addressed:

Firstly, in order to properly address threats to peace and security, and to guarantee the Council's future efficiency, we need a better understanding of climate related security risks. We have made an important start over the last 18 months, by recognizing the adverse effects of climate change on stability in the Lake Chad Basin, West Africa and the Sahel.

Secondly, we need improved tools, analysis and reporting from the field to better address climate-related security challenges. The PRST on climate and security adopted seven years ago, asked for better reporting. However, that knowledge and information gap continues to exist, and urgently needs to be filled.

To be able to make informed decisions on how best to respond to the conflicts on our agenda, we must have all the information on what is driving them. This includes how a changing climate is contributing to these conflicts. Climate risk assessments should be part and parcel of relevant reporting to the Security Council. How climate risks interact with social, political, and economic factors as well as gender dimensions should be taken into account.

It is clear that climate risk has the potential to play an ever-increasing role in driving future conflicts. We need to invest in early warning in order to better understand where these potential vulnerabilities lie. To this end, we would

welcome regular forward looking regional and global reporting from the Secretariat on climate related security risks.

Thirdly, to deliver on all of this, an institutional home for these issues within the UN system is needed, we hope that Amina Mohammed might be the mother of this home, maybe under the leadership also of a special representative, with responsibility for bringing together information from all relevant UN agencies. Reporting and analysis should also draw on available research from outside the UN system, maybe through a network of universities and research institutes.

To this end, I am pleased to announce the launch of a Stockholm-based knowledge hub for Climate Security later this summer. This hub will increase collective understanding of these issues and will be available to the UN and other actors by providing evidence-based analysis.

An enhanced understanding of climate-related security risks and how to address them in the Security Council should not and will not duplicate responsibilities of the General Assembly or other UN bodies. Instead, it will ensure all UN bodies deliver on their respective mandates to the best of their ability – and that the system collectively delivers on more than the sum of its parts.

Fourthly, and lastly, in framing our response, we need to look to the countries on the front line, and learn from their experience and also from good practices.

For example:

Nepal and Sudan, with UN support, are taking steps to address climate related risks through pilot projects that map climate related security risks, with the aim of identifying resilience building interventions and programming.

The Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum established this year to enhance joint efforts towards building peace and fostering sustainable development across the region, has confirmed the importance of applying a holistic approach to complex and interlinked security challenges including climate change.

Led by the African Union Commission, the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel initiative is a truly integrated project for climate, security and

peace which aims to halt desertification, boost food security and resilience to climate change, whilst creating jobs. This is conflict prevention and sustaining peace in practice.

We must capitalize on this knowledge on the ground and integrate it in our efforts to end conflict and sustain peace.

Regional organizations, such as the AU and the EU, as well as within the Pacific Small Island Developing States, the Alliance of Small Island States, and CARICOM, are already providing momentum to the international response to climate related security risks.

It is now imperative that the United Nations catches up, and takes the lead in facilitating and coordinating global efforts, working with regional partners and other stakeholders.

The Secretary-General's Climate Summit in September 2019 represents a pivotal moment to make progress on this issue. The concrete steps I have mentioned today should work towards guaranteeing that climate-related security risks are on the agenda at this summit.

Dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, the threat that a changing climate presents to our societies and to international peace and security cannot be underestimated. It has already created a new reality for the communities I met in the Sahel. To realistically and meaningfully respond to their needs; to address the conflicts of today; to meet the calls from Hindou and others; and to prevent the conflicts of tomorrow, we too can no longer afford to ignore this threat.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Swedish statement at the UNSC Briefing on Peace and Security in Africa

Published 10 July 2018

National statement delivered by Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden Margot Wallström on behalf of Sweden at the United Nations Security Council Briefing on Peace and Security in Africa, 10 July 2018, New York.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Yesterday morning, the Deputy Secretary-General, the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, and I arrived in New York from Niger. It was my privilege to join Amina and Binta on the AU-UN joint high-level mission focused on Women, Peace and Security in the Sahel. It is now my pleasure to welcome my travel companions to today's meeting.

As others have done already, I would like to thank the Governments of Niger and Chad for their generous hospitality, and the inspiring women and men we met during our mission for sharing their stories with us.

I would like to make three points following our mission.

Firstly, on the overall challenges in the region; secondly, how we address the interrelated nature of these challenges; and thirdly, that all of this is not a women's issue – it is a peace and security issue.

Dear colleagues,

First, the countries we visited and the Sahel region are located between hope



and despair.

HOPE, because the Sahel is blessed with abundant human, cultural and natural resources, for example solar energy, offering tremendous capital for rapid growth. It is also the most youthful region of the world with 64,5 percent of the population aged less than 25 years.

Hope was inspired also by the women and girls we met, who had moved from victims to survivors to agents of change. By youth, who look at their futures with confidence, despite their difficult circumstances.

And, by the vibrant and determined civil society organisations working to improve the lives of men, women, girls and boys across the region. We also heard from the governments of Chad and Niger about their efforts, together with other countries in the region, to promote regional stability and combat terrorism, including through the Multinational Joint Task Force and the G5 Sahel Joint Force.

But also DESPAIR, because of chronic underdevelopment, terrorism and violent extremism, a lack of respect for human rights, and the negative effects of climate change. 24 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, and the growing insecurity has worsened vulnerabilities. Today the national budgets are used to finance security concerns, as we already heard; with less money available for education and health. These challenges affect women and men, boys and girls, differently. Women often bear a disproportionate burden.

In the Lake Chad region, where people are already facing a food and nutrition crisis, we heard how the shrinking of the lake and growing insecurity have had severe consequences for people who traditionally have sustained themselves by fishing activities. However, now, women are learning to fish – the said before the fish were big and the men did the fishing, now they are small and we can do the fishing. The fisher women we met in Bol told us that they wished for only three things: bigger boats, better nets – and to not get raped. This simple request illustrates the conditions under which they live, marked by poverty as well as by sexual and gender-based violence.

In both Chad and Niger, we met with civil society representatives who described challenges such as a lack of female candidates for public offices, inadequate health care and difficulties in ensuring education for girls. In Niger, we heard that three out of four girls will be married before turning 18,

with devastating consequences, as Ms Diop has already said. We met with women religious leaders and discussed efforts to prevent radicalization and end the practice of child marriage. And we were encouraged to see that in both countries, women were coming together in networks to address the challenges they face, including sexual and reproductive health and rights and access to basic social services.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Secondly, this joint mission encompassed all aspects of the United Nations work – peace and security, human rights, humanitarian assistance and development. And, it was once again clear to me, during our mission, how these areas of work overlap.

The many challenges in the Sahel cannot be dealt with separately, but rather require joined up political strategies and integrated responses. The United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and its support plan are key tools at our disposal to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the AU's Agenda 2063. Gender equality and women's empowerment is one of the strategy's five key priorities.

We must spare no effort in ensuring implementation. We need to expand the choices and opportunities available for women, from an early age. This means ensuring education for girls, addressing restricting traditional and related social norms and fighting poverty. It means going back to basics, starting where we can make a difference.

Yet, the resources needed to fully address the challenges in the region are woefully inadequate. We need to step up our efforts to mobilize support and strengthen national capacities to respond to inequalities, fight impunity, create sustainable livelihoods, and empower and educate women and girls. Aid needs to be gender-sensitive, taking into account the different situations of women and men and promoting equality.

Thirdly, our visit also underlined that all of this taken together is not solely a women's issue – it is a peace and security issue.

In the Lac region of Chad, we were deeply moved by Halima, who had been married away as a 15-year-old child and then trained by Boko Haram to be a suicide bomber. She lost both her legs when the suicide vests of some of the girls who had been trained with her exploded as they entered a busy market.

Today, Halima is a paralegal and actively engaged in the prevention of violent extremism, as well as a powerful symbol of the many roles of women in peace and security.

The increased use of female suicide bombers - two-thirds of suicide attacks in 2017 were carried out by women or girls - illustrates the cruel way in which terrorists seek to exploit the perceived "goodness" of women to maximize harm – in terms of victims of suicide bombings, but also for communities and families.

This is disastrous given women's role as pillars of families, societies and communities. Societies could collapse. But women are fighting on. We have to empower and educate girls and women, and we have to end child marriages.

To fight terrorism, there is no doubt that we need to adopt a gender-sensitive and human rights based approach – whether we are talking about the prevention of radicalization, counter-terrorism operations or providing support to victims.

Finally, let me end by answering the question of why this is a matter for you around this table – a matter for the UN Security Council. Essentially because their destiny is also our destiny.

So what can and must we do. In two years, Security Council Resolution 1325 will be 20 years old.

I want to put the following challenge to the UN system and all Member States: By 2020, ensure that UN peacekeeping and political missions fully deliver on the women, peace and security agenda.

The Security Council has a critical role to play. This includes by ensuring:

- that women's voices are heard around peace negotiation tables,
- that women's voices are heard in this chamber,
- that mission mandates include a women, peace and security perspective,
- that gender posts in missions continue to be funded, and women, peace and security taskings adequately resourced and prioritized,
- that gender is systematically included in mission reporting and monitoring.

We must all set the same challenge for ourselves. And, you can count on Sweden to do its part to support this effort. To start, we will continue to ensure that civil society perspectives are heard in this chamber.

For the annual 1325 debate, we commit to host a civil society forum. We also commit to supporting the Secretariat to build capacity for enhanced gender responsive reporting. Only then will we gain a full understanding of the challenges and the most effective responses.

Let us continue and intensify our efforts to support the countries in the Sahel on the issues we have discussed today. I commend the African Union and the UN for joining forces and deepening their partnership on women, peace and security.

Missions like the one undertaken last week should become annual events, and every Security Council meeting should consider the women, peace and security perspective as an essential part of our work to end conflicts. I have no doubt that, if we were to do so, our motto of more women, more peace would become a reality.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on violence in Gaza

Published 15 May 2018

I would like to express my deep dismay, shock and sadness at the violence and the rising death toll among Palestinians protesting in Gaza, where Israeli forces have once again used live ammunition against civilians. Yesterday, more than 55 people were killed and over 2 200 were injured.

Both sides have a responsibility to de-escalate the situation. The right to pursue peaceful protests must be respected, while those leading the protests need to avoid provocations and the use of violence.

I call on Israel to respect the right to peaceful protest. Every state, Israel included, has a right to defend its borders, but all measures taken must be proportionate and Israel's forces must exercise maximum restraint in their use of live ammunition. As the occupying power, Israel has a responsibility to protect Palestinian civilians. Furthermore, it is imperative not to put children in harm's way. An independent and transparent investigation is urgently needed, as called for by the UN Secretary-General.

The ongoing violence is taking place against the backdrop of a dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, the continued occupation of Palestine, a stalled peace process and yesterday's opening of the US Embassy in Jerusalem.

Both sides need to urgently refrain from violence and commit to returning to peaceful negotiations, aiming for a two-state solution based on international law and relevant UN resolutions, with Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states. In Gaza, humanitarian needs must be met.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström regarding Guatemala's request that the Swedish Government recall its Ambassador to Guatemala

Published 11 May 2018

Guatemala has requested that the Government recall our Ambassador to Guatemala, Anders Kompass. This is very unfortunate. We are now going to seek further explanation from the Guatemalan Government and then decide on a course of action. In this case, as in other similar cases, the Government will keep its comments to a minimum. Sweden's views and action on issues regarding human rights and anti-corruption are well known.



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on President Trump's decision to withdraw the United States from the Iran nuclear deal

Published 09 May 2018

It is now clear that President Trump has decided that the United States will withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal. President Trump's decision is deeply regrettable. It risks seriously undermining international peace and security architecture. The decision also risks negative repercussions for global non-proliferation efforts. The Swedish Government will now closely study and analyse the effects of the decision – bilaterally, in the EU and in the United Nations Security Council. President Trump's announcement on the introduction of new sanctions is particularly concerning. It is, however, too soon to determine its full consequences. We continue to stand united with the EU in our full support for the deal and its implementation. Sweden and the EU will work to preserve the JCPOA. It is now important that the deal continues to be respected and that Iran

continues to fulfil its commitments. There is also strong EU support for broad and close relations with Iran, including on issues concerning the human rights situation. This is about doing what best promotes the forces of good in Iran and yields the best results. In parallel, although we view Iran's ballistic missile programme with concern, this must be handled separately from the JCPOA. The 2015 nuclear deal was negotiated over a period of 10 years and is one of the greatest successes of our time for diplomacy, peaceful conflict resolution, prevention of armed conflict, disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The JCPOA has been endorsed by the United Nations Security Council. Provided the JCPOA is implemented, the threat of Iranian nuclear weapons development is averted during the period the deal applies. The International Atomic Energy Agency recently confirmed that Iran is living up to its commitments, which has been welcomed by the Swedish Government and the EU. The deal also reduces tensions in the region and the risk of armed conflict. There is currently no alternative plan. In a time of conflict in the Middle East, we must avoid further uncertainty and polarisation. The international community must take constructive steps to reduce the tension and find political solutions to ongoing conflicts.





Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Swedish statement at the UN Security Council Briefing on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

Published 26 April 2018

National Statement delivered by H.E. Ms Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden, at the United Nations Security Council Briefing on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, 25 April 2018, New York.

Thank you Mr President,

I will begin with some thanks to you Mr President and the Peruvian Presidency for hosting today's meeting and, to you, Secretary-General also for your statement; and Secretary-General, you know that you have our support, our full support.

Let me also thank our briefers, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Mr. Dan Neuculescu, and of course African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smaïl Chergui.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the members of the Security Council for their participation in the Secretary-General's retreat at the estate of Dag Hammarskjöld at Backåkra last weekend. Thank you for taking the trouble to come.

Now, the 25th of April is a special day because we commemorate the pimperl revolution, which ended dictatorship in Portugal, and colonial rule

in many lusophone countries. It set Portugal on the path to European integration, joined by Spain and Greece.

Indeed, this example, which inspired a generation of Europeans, including me, compels us to reflect on the fabric of sustaining peace.

And fostering the same commitment to sustain peace, that inspired leaders following two devastating world wars, could hardly be more pressing. In 2016, more countries were affected by conflict than at any time in nearly 30 years. The types of security challenges have become more complex, and are often interrelated. Once ignited, such conflicts can take years to quench – requiring investments in peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, resilience, peacebuilding and development. Not to mention the cost in human lives and human potential. This, if anything, provides a strong incentive for us to increase investments in prevention. Can we afford not to prevent conflicts?

Mr President,

The Secretary-General has made sustaining peace the overarching purpose of the reforms to the UN system and his follow-up report to the resolutions of 2016 offers a clear roadmap.

Now we must move to action.

So today, let me just shortly outline three core commitments that are needed to operationalise the Sustaining Peace agenda:

First: to boost equality and inclusive national ownership.

Multi-dimensional poverty, abuses and violations of human rights and growing inequality are challenges increasingly influencing the situations that appear on this Council's agenda. Addressing exclusion and structural discrimination is therefore critical for prevention.

Importantly, no peace is sustainable, just or legitimate if it shuts out half the population. The full and effective participation of women in peace and security is core Council business. Not for the sake of women, but for the sake of peace and security. Gender equality benefits all.

Likewise, violations and abuses of human rights erode trust within societies and are root causes of conflict. Human rights are not optional extras. Building inclusive societies requires states to abide by their obligations under international law, to respect, protect and promote all human rights – civil,

political, economic, social and cultural.

Second: improve early warning and commit to preventive action.

Within this Council we must establish a practice of early discussions on situations at risk of escalating into violent conflict, as we heard examples of before here, with a view to preventing them from emerging.

There are a number of tools at our disposal that would allow us to engage in early action and these include the Peacebuilding Commission, the Ad Hoc Working Group on conflict prevention and resolution, and the many informal meeting formats at the Council's disposal. We must utilise them.

We need independent, authoritative and candid advice from the Secretary-General based on comprehensive analysis. This includes analysis on new and emerging threats, such as climate change, in fact not new, that's true, but emerging to improve our collective understanding, strategic planning and response.

And thirdly, target drivers through collaborative action.

If conflicts have multiple drivers, then no single action alone can prevent them. Cross-pillar cooperation and a system-wide approach are essential. This means going beyond sharing individual country plans to being jointly accountable for delivering a common goal. It means true collaboration that delivers enhanced synergies and lead to results that are greater than the sum of the individual parts.

Furthermore, as we heard already, to enhance our partnerships with regional and sub-regional organizations. They are the eyes and the ears on the ground, they understand their neighbours, and can intervene when we cannot.

The Peacebuilding Commission is a vehicle for collaborative action and partnerships. It is uniquely placed to convene international actors for coordinated and strategic responses for sustaining peace. So we can unlock the full potential of the Commission – for more informal and frequent interactions between the Council and the Commission. The catalytic role played by the Peacebuilding Fund has been extremely useful and Sweden therefore intends to double our support to the fund.

So Mr President,

In conclusion, preventing violent conflict is a Charter obligation. The sustaining peace approach allows us to improve this Council's ability to do its part in delivering on that responsibility. And today, we as Member States must play our part, by mustering the political will and wholeheartedly supporting the Secretary-General and his vision of putting conflict prevention at the centre of this organization.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström at the High-Level Meeting on Sustaining Peace

Published 24 April 2018

National statement delivered by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on behalf of Sweden at the United Nations General Assembly opening of the High-Level Meeting on Sustaining Peace, 24 April 2018, New York.

Mr President,

First of all thank you very much for bringing us together in this high-level meeting on Sustaining Peace. This week offers an excellent opportunity to advance this important agenda.

A significant breakthrough in the twin resolutions on Sustaining Peace in 2016, recognizing that efforts to sustain peace were necessary not only at the end of a conflict, but long beforehand, through the prevention of conflict and addressing its root causes.

The real test is to translate this into change on the ground. As we all know it requires continued strong political commitment at the highest level, from all countries, north and south, small and large.

I would like to outline three core cases, as I would like to call them, for operationalizing the 'Sustaining Peace' agenda:

First: The economic case: Invest in peace.

Second: A sovereignty case: Which means Prioritize inclusion.  
And thirdly: The regional case. Support reform for prevention.

1. And if I start with The economic case for preventing violent conflicts it is undisputable. It can save up to tens of billions of dollars per year.

And that is reason enough to review our investment portfolios on peace and security. And what does it mean for the UN?

The financially largest part of the UN is the development system. The 2030 Agenda offers an integrated framework to address the economic and social drivers of conflict, and to build stable societies, including through focusing on institutions, human rights and the rule of law.

And to be agile and relevant in-country, we need to provide adequate, predictable and sustainable resources. Sweden is one of the largest contributors to UN development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. We are currently in the process of entering into multi-year agreements with the funds and programs, with continued ambitious and even increasing levels of Swedish core support.

Core funding is an investment in peace.

We should heed the Secretary-General's call for a quantum leap in the Peacebuilding Fund.

This year, we intend to contribute approximately 24 million US dollars to the fund. Sweden will more than double its core support in 2018, with an increase of approximately 12 million US dollars. We are examining the possibility of having a multi-year funding agreement with the fund.

2. The second case has to do with fighting inequality. In the 1970's, Sweden's then Prime Minister, Olof Palme, told the General Assembly that "equality within nations is a prerequisite for equality between them". And I think that still rings true. Building inclusive societies is fundamental for sustaining peace.

And therefor, equality must be at the forefront of our efforts. Exclusion and discrimination are root causes of conflict that are often overlooked. We have to address all dimensions of inequality. This includes frank discussion about discrimination based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and income inequalities as well as other mechanisms of oppression.

Investments in capacity and legitimate national institutions, can also bring

strengthened sovereignty. Sustaining peace and avoiding a relapse into conflict entails reaching inclusive political solutions and addressing the root causes of conflict.

That is why we have heard already, several of the before speakers before me have said the same thing, empowering women, youth and children is critical for sustaining peace, and indeed core peace and security business.

Harnessing their potential increases the resilience of all societies – and benefits all, women and men, girls and boys. Investing in youth and children today, prevents the conflicts of tomorrow.

3. Finally, advancing the sustaining peace agenda requires political will. We must be open to change.

The beneficiaries of our work are not in NY, but at country-level. And my country therefore fully supports the principles for reform articulated by the Secretary-General: a country-level and people-centered perspective, gender parity, decentralized responsibility and decision-making, and reformed budget procedures.

Key to push coherence and avoid fragmentation is an impartial, independent and empowered UN resident coordinator; driving implementation of a UN development assistance framework that can rally all members of a UN country team to accompany national efforts on Agenda 2030. I call on fellow Member States to go the extra mile in the current negotiations on the UN Development System, particularly on the financing aspects.

A stronger coordination between development, humanitarian and conflict prevention efforts in the field is so important.

Lastly, the UN cannot – and should not – do it alone. Partnerships at the regional and sub-regional levels for early warning and conflict prevention have proved invaluable. ECOWAS is a case in point. Their well-developed infrastructure should be sustainably supported.

Mr President,

In conclusion, we Member States carry an immense responsibility. That responsibility is to turn the promise of Sustaining Peace into a reality that touches the lives of those living under the shadow of conflict and violence. However, peace is never inevitable. It is clear –that if we want peace, we

must prepare for peace.





Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström regarding the strikes in Syria last night

Published 14 April 2018

The conflict in Syria has killed hundreds of thousands of people. Millions of people have been forced to flee, families have been torn apart and lives have been shattered. The conflict has involved atrocities and violence by the Syrian regime and its allies. The use of chemical weapons is the most horrific weapon of war used in the Syrian conflict. Chemical weapons are prohibited and their use is a serious threat to international peace and security. Sweden understands the anger that has been provoked by the horrendous attacks committed in Syria.

We regret that the United Nations Security Council, not least because of the Russian veto, has not been able to agree on how the use of chemical weapons in Syria should be stopped by political means and in accordance with the UN Charter. The United States, the United Kingdom and France took military action in Syria last night aimed at deterring the use of chemical weapons.

Efforts to achieve a political solution and ensure compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention continue. It is now important that the conflict does not escalate, that the UN-led process continues and that the Security Council takes its responsibility under international law. This is the only way we can achieve lasting peace in Syria.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Margot Wallström in support of the United Kingdom

Published 15 March 2018

I have spoken tonight with my British colleague Boris Johnson and conveyed my wholehearted support. I emphasised that Sweden has unequivocally condemned the use of the nerve agent against Sergei Skripal, his daughter and other civilians on UK soil. I reiterated our solidarity with the UK, as a partner in the EU and close friend to Sweden.

Sweden has noted Theresa May's assessment that the nerve agent in question has been identified as the type developed as a chemical weapon in the Soviet Union and later taken over by Russia, and that Russian involvement in this attack seems highly likely. We have also been clear that all use of chemical weapons is unacceptable.

Moreover, we have supported the UK's request that the matter be raised in the United Nations Security Council today. We support the UK's demand that Russia explain how this nerve agent came to be used in a murder attempt in the UK.

It is essential that those responsible for this attack be brought to justice.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement in relation to the anniversary of the murder of Zaida Catalán

Published 12 March 2018

## Statement by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

One year ago, Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp disappeared. They were later found brutally murdered in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The loss has been deeply felt. In Sweden, Zaida was important to many people. Before becoming an international civil servant, she had been a youth leader of one of the political parties now in government. Indeed, she was always on a mission to change the world for the better; to make it more just, equal and dignified. She was energetic, with contagious enthusiasm and an unwavering commitment to her ideals and service.

Since day one, the Swedish government has worked to ensure that the murders are fully investigated, and the perpetrators brought to justice. We support the work of the follow-on mechanism appointed by the Secretary-General to assist Congolese investigative authorities. Further international investigation may be necessary. And if so, we will call for it and work to ensure it is carried out. No stone should be left unturned in this work.

This is important not only for the sake of achieving justice for Zaida and Michael. It also matters because they worked for the UN, as members of a group mandated by the Security Council. The safety of sanctions experts must be ensured, because this must never happen again. For this reason, Sweden took the initiative to include a specific criterion related to sanctions expert in the sanction regime for the DRC. Work is also underway within the UN system to review security routines for experts in the field. Sweden will

continue to promote human rights and democratic development in the DRC,  
to carry forward the legacy of Zaida and Michael.



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Security Council to gather at request of Sweden and Kuwait to discuss implementation of resolution on the humanitarian situation in Syria

Published 09 March 2018

## Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström

I welcome the UN Secretary-General's positive response to the request by Sweden and Kuwait to update the UN Security Council on 12 March on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2401. In the resolution, a unanimous Security Council demands a cessation of hostilities throughout Syria to allow emergency relief to reach those in need and enable medical evacuations to be conducted. The meeting on Monday will take place two weeks after the adoption of the resolution, and I expect the UN to update the Council on the resolution's implementation and present proposals for any measures that need to be taken.

The parties, and those with influence over the parties, must do considerably more for the resolution's implementation. Sweden will continue to conduct intensive diplomatic efforts in New York and in capital cities throughout the world to contribute to this goal. We will leave no stone unturned.

I welcome the efforts of the UN and its partner organisations to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches those in need. The fact that medical equipment was removed from convoys this week by the Syrian authorities is not only deeply outrageous, it also contravenes international law.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström

Published 24 February 2018

I welcome the Security Council's adoption today of the resolution put forward by Sweden and Kuwait for a cessation of hostilities in Syria. This will be beneficial for Syria's civilian population, who must be given a respite from the horrors of this war. Hospital and schools must not be the target of bombs.

The purpose of the cessation of hostilities, which will last for at least 30 days, is to enable humanitarian aid to reach the civilian population in the country and to facilitate medical evacuation. A temporary cessation of hostilities improves the chances of humanitarian and medical assistance reaching those in need.

The resolution also requires all parties to respect international law, including humanitarian law and human rights.

I also welcome the fact the Security Council succeeded in reaching agreement today – this is a gain for the legitimacy and credibility of the Council. Sweden will continue to work to ensure that the Council takes its responsibility.



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden and Kuwait to present resolution in UN Security Council on humanitarian situation in Syria

Published 13 February 2018

After seven years of war, the violence and suffering in Syria continue. A peaceful solution appears remote. Despite efforts to reduce the violence, recent weeks have been among the bloodiest since the conflict began. Thousands of people have lost their lives, tens of thousands have been forced to flee, and hospitals and schools have been bombed.

The humanitarian situation remains one of the worst the world has seen, with millions of displaced people, many of them still in Syria. The vulnerability of women and children remains a matter of concern. The situation of the humanitarian organisations continues to be difficult, and they are often denied access to the many people in need in Syria. When international law, including humanitarian law, is violated on a daily basis, it is our duty to act.

For this reason, Sweden and Kuwait – at the request of the humanitarian actors – are presenting a resolution in the UN Security Council to bring about a ceasefire, an end to sieges and attacks against civilians, hospitals and schools, guaranteed humanitarian access and medical evacuation of those most in need in Syria. Sweden and Kuwait have a particular responsibility for the Security Council's work on humanitarian issues in Syria in light of our role as penholders. In this role, last December Sweden and the then two co-penholders, Egypt and Japan, helped ensure that a resolution allowing continued cross-border humanitarian assistance to Syria was passed.

It is now essential for the international community to take collective action to achieve, in a first stage, a ceasefire and guarantee access for the humanitarian organisations so as to provide protection and provisions to the civilian population. At the same time, it remains clear that the only way to

reduce the suffering is to find a sustainable political solution to the conflict. In this regard, all actors must actively and constructively support the UN-led peace process in Geneva and try to find a solution to the conflict in line with Security Council Resolution 2254. Countries that hold particular influence over the parties, not least the countries behind the Astana Agreement, have a special responsibility to end the suffering.

Sweden will continue to support the efforts of UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura to find a political solution. In addition, we will continue to support, through humanitarian support and long-term development assistance measures, those affected by the conflict and forced to flee. However, the situation on the ground is so desperate that urgent action is required. It is our duty to try to reconcile disagreements in the Security Council and reach consensus on the importance of bringing the violence to an end and ensuring the delivery of the humanitarian assistance. Gaining support for the resolution will not be easy – but we must try.





Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Margot Wallström regarding the detention of the Swedish citizen Gui Minhai

Published 05 February 2018

The continued detention of the Swedish citizen Gui Minhai in China is a very serious matter. The brutal intervention in January against a Swedish support operation was conducted in spite of repeated assurances from the Chinese authorities that Mr Gui was free at that time. China's actions were in contravention of basic international rules on consular support. The current situation also raises questions about the application of the rule of law, including the prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of liberty. We demand that our citizen be given the opportunity to meet Swedish diplomatic and medical staff, and that he be released so that he can be reunited with his daughter and family.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Margot Wallström on the death sentence against Ahmadreza Djalali

Published 05 February 2018

Sweden demands that the death sentence against Ahmadreza Djalali is not enforced, and has repeatedly protested against the sentence together with the other EU Member States. This is being reiterated to senior Iranian representatives today. Sweden's position with regard to the death penalty is well-known. It is an inhuman, cruel and irreversible punishment. Sweden and the rest of the EU condemn its use in all its forms.

In light of the news that the death sentence has been confirmed, the Iranian Ambassador was summoned to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs today.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement in connection with the detention of Swedish citizen Gui Minhai

Published 23 January 2018

## Statement by the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallström

We take a very serious view of the detention on Saturday of Swedish citizen Gui Minhai, with no specific reason being given for the detention, which took place during an ongoing consular support mission.

China's Ambassador in Stockholm was summoned to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs both on Saturday and yesterday.

As has been clear from media reports, Mr Gui Minhai was at the time of his detention in the company of diplomatic staff, who were providing consular assistance to a Swedish citizen in need of medical care. This was perfectly in line with basic international rules giving us the right to provide our citizens with consular support.

The Chinese authorities have assured us on numerous occasions that Mr Gui Minhai has been free since his release having served a sentence for a traffic-related offence, and that we can have any contact we wish with our fellow citizen.

We expect the immediate release of our fellow citizen, and that he be given the opportunity to meet Swedish diplomatic and medical staff.



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement on the vote in the UN General Assembly on the resolution concerning Jerusalem

Published 22 December 2017

The UN General Assembly voted on Thursday 21 December on a resolution concerning Jerusalem. The vote was important as it was intended to reaffirm Jerusalem's special status. Sweden voted in favour, and we are pleased that a clear majority of the UN's 193 Member States did the same.

Sweden's vote for the resolution is a vote for international law and for peace. As long ago as 1947, Jerusalem was given a special legal and political status by the UN. The issue of the city's status can only be resolved through negotiations between Israel and Palestine, based on international law. The EU has clearly reaffirmed its view of Jerusalem as a final status issue and as a future capital of two states. In these uncertain times, it is more important than ever that Sweden continues to stand up for the international rules-based system, which it does in all contexts.

I hope that the widespread attention the issue has recently generated can help put the need for a two-state solution back in the spotlight. Our goal – with two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, and with Jerusalem as the capital of both states – remains firm. Active engagement from the countries in the region and the world at large is necessary to make progress on this issue. The UN has a key role to play in this work.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Wallström regarding the Security Council's extraordinary meeting on Jerusalem

Published 08 December 2017

The UN Security Council convened today for an emergency meeting on Jerusalem at the request of Sweden, Bolivia, Egypt, France, Italy, Senegal, the UK and Uruguay. The fact that a majority of Council members requested the meeting, including all EU Member States on the Security Council, shows the seriousness with which the international community views the status of Jerusalem and the statement by the United States.

The US statement of 6 December recognising Jerusalem as Israel's capital is not in line with international law and UN Security Council resolutions, and risks leading to strong reactions and greater instability in an already turbulent region. All final status issues, including Jerusalem's status as a future capital of both states, must be resolved through negotiations between the parties and not through unilateral action by the parties or others.

The Security Council was united today in calling for calm and restraint. All parties must refrain from the use of violence.

The Security Council has a responsibility for the peace process. All credible efforts to restart the peace process must be supported. Sweden calls on all stakeholders to engage in efforts to achieve peace.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement concerning US statement about Jerusalem

Published 06 December 2017

The Government deeply regrets the US statement about Jerusalem. The UN has given Jerusalem a special legal and political status, which the Security Council has called upon the international community to respect. There is a risk that this statement may lead to strong reactions and greater instability in an already turbulent region, and have long-term strategic consequences for the peace process.

The EU has clearly stated its view of Jerusalem as a separate entity and as a future capital for two states. EU foreign ministers have emphasised that the EU has never recognised Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem and that achieving a lasting peace requires resolving the status of Jerusalem through negotiations. The US statement does not affect the position of the EU and Sweden concerning Jerusalem's special status. It is of the utmost importance that all states respect and safeguard this status.

Sweden's long-standing commitment to a two-state solution remains. We are working to ensure that Israel and Palestine can live side by side in peace and security. All final status issues, including Jerusalem's status as a future capital for both states, must be resolved through negotiations between the parties and not through unilateral action by the parties or others.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Wallström regarding political developments in Cambodia

Published 17 November 2017

The Swedish Government takes a very serious view of today's decision by the Supreme Court of Cambodia to dissolve the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), the country's main opposition party. The CNRP received 43.8 per cent of the vote in local elections in 2017. The recent repressive measures against the opposition, the media and civil society organisations represent a serious setback for democratic development and human rights in Cambodia.

Sweden and the EU made our position against these political developments clear at an early stage. In our view these developments seriously restrict the democratic space in advance of Cambodia's general election in July 2018. Free and fair elections are a cornerstone of democracy. Elections in which the main opposition party is not allowed to participate cannot be regarded as legitimate.

The Swedish Government urges Cambodia to allow the political opposition, the media and civil society organisations to operate freely.

In light of these adverse political developments, the Swedish Government will review the forms of our engagement in Cambodia.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement - Catalonia

Published 30 October 2017

The Swedish Government fully supports the efforts taken by the Spanish Government and its institutions to safeguard the constitutional order in Catalonia in accordance with the rule of law and with respect for citizens' rights. The election to be held in Catalonia on 21 December will hopefully pave the way for a return to the constitutional order and a return to normality.

The unilateral declaration of independence adopted on Friday in the now dissolved Parliament of Catalonia violates the Spanish Constitution and is therefore illegal under Spanish law. As Sweden has already pointed out, the matter of Catalonia's status in Spain is an internal Spanish matter, and a solution must be sought within the framework of the Spanish Constitution.





Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Margot Wallström regarding North Korea's latest missile launch

Published 15 September 2017

Sweden condemns North Korea's latest missile launch. Firing a second missile over Japanese territory is a very serious act that further escalates tensions. We share the concern that is felt in Japan and other countries in the region.

It is extremely important that the UN Security Council meets today. Unity in the Security Council is crucial to enable the international community to continue to respond vigorously and collectively. It is vital that all countries now fully implement the sanctions adopted by the UN Security Council.

North Korea should immediately fulfil its international obligations and begin phasing out its nuclear weapons and missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the crisis in Rakhine State, Myanmar

Published 14 September 2017

At the initiative of Sweden and the United Kingdom, on 13 September the United Nations Security Council held an extraordinary meeting on the crisis in Rakhine State in Myanmar. The situation has deteriorated further in recent weeks, with almost 400 000 people being forced to flee to Bangladesh. According to UNICEF, 80 per cent of those people are women and children.

I am horrified by the continued violence and the reports of abuses and violations of human rights. Accounts of the disproportionate and excessive use of violence by the military and security forces are deeply troubling. This must stop. Humanitarian support must be allowed to reach those in need of protection and assistance. As is always the case in crises and conflicts, women and children are among those suffering most.

Thorough, independent investigations of the abuses and violations of human rights must be allowed, and those responsible must be held to account. The fact-finding mission appointed by the UN Human Rights Council must be given access to the area and allowed to meet the people affected.

Bringing about a long-term solution to the conflict means tackling its root causes. The Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, led by Kofi Annan, has presented important recommendations. The government of Myanmar should immediately implement these recommendations, and Sweden stands ready to support Myanmar to this end.

I welcome the leadership of the UN Secretary-General and his letter to the members of the Security Council of 2 September, urging active endeavours to prevent further suffering in Rakhine and increased efforts to prevent further escalation of the crisis. Sweden today contributed to the Security Council condemning the violence in Rakhine that has forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee, calling for an immediate de-escalation of the violence, and emphasising the importance of humanitarian assistance reaching the entire population without discrimination. Sweden will continue to work to ensure that the Security Council remains abreast of developments in Rakhine.



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the UN Security Council's resolution on North Korea

Published 12 September 2017

Sweden welcomes the resolution on North Korea adopted today by the UN Security Council. It is very important that the Security Council has been able to respond forcefully and that the Security Council remains united.

Sweden condemns in the strongest terms the test of a nuclear device conducted by North Korea on 2 September. This is a serious breach of the country's international obligations, UN Security Council resolutions and the principles set out in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). North Korea's actions are a threat to international peace and security.

Sweden urges North Korea to immediately cease its provocative actions, fulfil its international obligations and begin phasing out its nuclear weapons and missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

It is now more important than ever to take measures to reduce tensions and the risk of misunderstandings and mistakes. We share the concern of the countries in the region.

In the longer term, the situation can only be resolved through peaceful means. It is therefore of great importance to continue to encourage dialogue and confidence-building measures.



Statement from Peter Hultqvist

# Joint statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist

Published 04 September 2017

A treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons was adopted at the UN General Assembly in July this year. Sweden has long been active on the issue of nuclear disarmament. This is why it is important for the Government to support the UN's work on a treaty of this kind. We will soon appoint an inquiry to look into all of the consequences of the treaty, including for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and Sweden's defence policy cooperation. The forms for this inquiry will be presented shortly.

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves us well. National defence capability will be strengthened while our defence and security policy cooperation continues to be developed. Our foreign and security policy works through diplomacy, mediation, conflict prevention and trust-building measures. This increases Sweden's ability to promote détente and stability both in our neighbourhood and globally.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on North Korea's test of a nuclear device on 3 September 2017

Published 04 September 2017

Sweden condemns the test of a nuclear device conducted today by North Korea. This is a serious breach of the country's international obligations, UN Security Council resolutions and the principles of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). North Korea's actions are a threat to international peace and security.

Sweden urges North Korea to immediately cease its provocative actions, fulfil its international obligations and begin phasing out its nuclear weapons and missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

It is very important that the UN Security Council assembles to discuss this latest development.

It is now more important than ever to take measures to reduce tensions and the risk of misunderstandings and mistakes. We share the concern of the countries in the region.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement on the situation in Guatemala

Published 30 August 2017

**Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin.**

The Swedish Government regrets the decision to expel the Commissioner for the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), Ivan Velásquez, which was taken by the country's President Jimmy Morales on Sunday. Under Commissioner Velásquez's strong and active leadership, the Commission has had a central role in efforts to counter corruption and strengthen the rule of law in Guatemalan society.

Sweden is the second largest donor to the CICIG, whose work is now held up as a model in the region and globally. Support to the CICIG is a central component of Swedish development cooperation with Guatemala, which partly aims to strengthen civil society in the country and promote a strengthened democracy and increased respect for human rights.

It is of the utmost importance that Guatemala's government protects the rule of law and fundamental democratic principles in this situation. We stand united with large sections of the international community in our intention to continue to support the democratic forces in Guatemala and to strengthen respect for human rights.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs on North Korea's latest missile test

Published 30 August 2017

North Korea's latest missile test over Japanese territory is a serious development and a clear provocation. We particularly share Japan's concern.

It is very important that the UN Security Council assembles immediately to discuss the latest development.

We urge North Korea to refrain from further provocative actions. North Korea should immediately fulfil its international obligations and begin phasing out its nuclear weapons and missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

It is now more important than ever to take measures to reduce tensions and the risk of misunderstandings and mistakes.





Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on developments in Turkey

Published 11 August 2017

Developments in Turkey are very worrying and the negative trend we have been seeing for several years now has recently accelerated. Sweden is working constantly to strengthen respect for human rights in Turkey. Sweden has for a long time been pursuing a policy of critical engagement with Turkey. The dialogue with Turkish representatives has increasingly involved critical messages concerning the deterioration of respect for human rights and the rule of law. In its contacts with Turkish representatives, both in Stockholm and in Turkey, the Government intends to continue presenting clear standpoints concerning developments.

This includes Sweden's firm view that measures against terrorism must not restrict fundamental rights and freedoms.

Recent developments concerning respect for human rights and the rule of law – not least the detention of opposition politicians, journalists and human rights activists – have added to increasing concern about this trend. These developments are also a reason for deeper commitment, both bilaterally and through the EU.

Read the human rights report about Turkey (in Swedish)

Bilaterally, we continue to provide support to actors working within the ever-shrinking democratic space. The negative trend we have seen in recent years concerning respect for human rights and the rule of law in Turkey strengthens our conviction that these are the areas in which we should continue to focus our support. We continually review the forms for this and who our cooperation partners are.

The Government is also pushing for the EU to jointly present its view of the

situation in Turkey. We work in similar ways in other multilateral forums too, such as the Council of Europe. Relations between Turkey and the EU will change if the current negative trend continues. Sweden intends to ensure that the situation in Turkey is discussed as soon as possible between EU foreign ministers. The cases of two detained Swedish citizens have received media attention recently. Everything we do is not outwardly visible – what we do and say is always determined by what we think will most benefit each individual case.

Since Ali Gharavi was detained, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) has been working intensively on the case. We expect Turkey to release Ali Gharavi if the basis for the accusations cannot be clarified.

The MFA has requested to meet the Swedish citizen who has been detained in Barcelona, Spain. The ground for his detention is an international arrest warrant from Turkey. The MFA has confirmed that he has a lawyer and is working to gain clarity on the accusations.

The MFA also receives a great many questions about our consular work in general. More than 200 Swedes are currently being detained abroad. Even if you are a tourist or temporary resident in another country, you are subject to the laws and the judicial system that apply in that country.

However, there are some possibilities for Sweden to play a certain role. If you are arrested by the police abroad, you have the right to contact your country's embassy. Through our embassy or consulate, we can monitor on the ground that the detainee has access to a public counsel and request to visit the person in prison. We can also contact relatives – if the person arrested so wishes. Providing advice and support to Swedes in emergency situations is a key task for our embassies.

We cannot intervene in another country's legal proceedings, but we can ensure that a trial is held in accordance with general principles of law. In our contact with the country in question, we can ask questions and point to shortcomings. In exceptional cases, when we have reason to believe that the trial is not proceeding as it should, we can ask to be present during a trial. This is of course more difficult with countries that do not uphold the rule of law and do not share our fundamental values. Another factor that sometimes complicates consular matters is dual citizenship. This can mean that Sweden does not gain access to, or information about, a Swede in an emergency situation.



Statement

# Government's views concerning the developments in Turkey.

Published 21 July 2017

In light of the current debate, I would like to present the Government's views concerning the developments in Turkey.

The Government often calls attention to Turkey's human rights violations in the forums where we believe that results have the greatest chance of being achieved, such as in the EU and the Council of Europe. We call attention to the situation of human rights defenders, civil society actors and others, and work to ensure that EU Member States continue to act together so that respect for human rights and the rule of law in Turkey is restored. Sweden also provides assistance to strengthen the capacity of civil society, the media and other agents of change in Turkey. Another important task for Sweden's reform support is to ensure that gender equality issues receive greater political priority and that the double vulnerability of women human rights defenders is highlighted.

Ever since Ali Gharavi and nine other people were arrested and imprisoned, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has worked tirelessly on the case. Our actions are always guided by what we believe is best for the Swede and his fellow prisoners.

I would like to report on some of the political and diplomatic steps we have taken. Our Consulate-General in Istanbul is in touch with Ali Gharavi's lawyer and went to the trial earlier this week, which however was held behind closed doors.

The Swedish Embassy in Ankara has demanded to visit him in prison. We have also had meetings with Turkish representatives, both in Ankara and the Turkish Embassy in Stockholm. The State Secretary for Foreign Affairs has also met with Gharavi's relatives and is in close contact with them, as the

Ministry for Foreign Affairs always is in consular cases.

One of the people detained is a German citizen, and we are cooperating closely with Germany. I spoke yesterday with my German colleague and decided that we would express our criticism and our demands together to the Turkish Government in Ankara. The Government also communicates that the EU, in its dialogue with Turkey, address the case of Gharavi and the other detained human rights activists and journalists. We will also take every opportunity for discussions between the EU and Turkey, on both these specific issues and the general human rights situation in the country. We have also raised these cases in the OSCE. The work in the Council of Europe, of which Turkey is a Member State, is also key.

In our contacts with Turkish representatives as well, we will continue to present our messages with regard to developments in Turkey, particularly concerning respect for human rights and the rule of law. We have been doing this for some time and intend to continue to do so as long as necessary. Open and good dialogue with Turkey is essential to successfully convey our messages.

Ali Gharavi and his colleagues have now been detained for more than two weeks. Unless the grounds for the charges can be clarified, I expect Turkey to release them as soon as possible.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on the arrests in Turkey

Published 20 July 2017

The Government takes a very serious view of the arrest of the Swedish human rights activist Ali Gharavi and the continued detention of him and the other activists arrested in Turkey on 5 July. We are working very intensively to establish some clarity concerning the arrest and are clear in our expectations of Turkey. It is our understanding that Mr Gharavi was in Turkey to take part in a peaceful seminar on internet freedom and human rights, and we have urged Turkey to promptly clarify the grounds for the accusations against him. We continue to work in close cooperation with Germany.

The Government is very concerned about developments in Turkey, not least in terms of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law. These detentions are a continuation of an extended period of measures against representatives of human rights organisations. A thriving civil society, as well as free media and a free opposition, are prerequisites for a pluralistic and democratic society.

The Government regularly expresses its concern over developments in Turkey to Turkish representatives in Stockholm and Ankara. We also push for these issues to be addressed in other contexts, such as in the EU and the Council of Europe. We will continue to exert pressure both bilaterally and together with other countries.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström regarding recent developments in Venezuela

Published 06 July 2017

The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs is following the increasingly violent developments in Venezuela with growing concern. Yesterday's violent actions against the democratically elected National Assembly mark an escalation of the crisis and constitute a deeply troubling attack on democracy.

The situation in Venezuela has been discussed at the meeting of EU foreign ministers, and EU Member States have firmly stated that the use of force is not a solution to the political crisis and tensions in the country. It is highly regrettable that the country's security forces are doing nothing to stop the violent acts of armed pro-government groups, the so-called 'colectivos'. The Government should listen to the country's Attorney General, Luisa Ortega Diaz, who has demanded that the security forces should intervene to stop the violence. At the same time she has criticized the security forces for the use of excessive force.

Elections to the Constituent National Assembly will be held on 30 July, with a view to revise the country's constitution. The decision to establish this new institution has been widely criticized and unfortunately appears to be yet another attempt to undermine the position of the elected parliament.

The deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation in Venezuela is alarming. We have been forced to witness human rights violations worsening, as demonstrators have been killed and imprisoned. I am also very concerned about the shortage of food and medicine that is becoming

increasingly acute and hits the most vulnerable the hardest. There are reports of infants dying of malnutrition, and many are talking about a humanitarian crisis.

The international community must act in unison to find a solution. As my EU colleagues and I recently stated, it is important that a date is set for national elections and that political prisoners are released in order to restore political stability in the country.

Sweden calls on all parties to respect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. We will also continue our work to enable the EU and other international actors to assist through humanitarian efforts aiming to meet the increasingly urgent needs of the Venezuelan people.

**Margot Wallström**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström concerning information about a new North Korean missile test

Published 04 July 2017

The information about a new missile test by North Korea is very alarming. It is still not clear whether this involved an intercontinental ballistic missile. The test launch is a violation of several Security Council resolutions and contributes to further increasing tensions in the region. These activities must cease. We encourage North Korea to begin a complete, verifiable and irrevocable dismantling of its nuclear and missile programmes. The UN Security Council should address this matter as soon as possible. This latest development underscores the need for dialogue to find a peaceful solution. All parties must help take steps in this direction.

**Margot Wallström**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs





Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs following the OPCW report on the chemical weapon attack in Khan Sheikhoun on 4 April 2017

Published 30 June 2017

I condemn in the strongest terms the use of nerve gas in Khan Sheikhoun on 4 April, as confirmed in a report by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) today. This is the first time since the atrocious attack in Al-Ghouta in August 2013 that nerve gas has been used in the armed conflict in Syria, and once more the lives of numerous civilian victims have been claimed.

I welcome the thorough and professional work of the OPCW and look forward to the investigation and identification of those responsible that will now be carried out by the OPCW-UN joint investigative mechanism (JIM). The use of chemical weapons in Syria is unacceptable, and violates international law. Those responsible must be brought to justice. Impunity is not an option.

Sweden will monitor the issue closely and contribute to the deliberations in the OPCW, the EU and the UN Security Council.



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Ministers Wallström and Koenders express their shock at the latest reports from UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) that the number of suspected cholera cases in Yemen has exceeded 200.000, with an estimated 5000 new cases every day

Published 27 June 2017

"The speed with which the epidemic is spreading is particularly worrisome. Especially children are at risk, already accounting for half of the registered cases to date, and about a quarter of the recorded fatalities. It is appalling to see yet another humanitarian crisis added to an already catastrophic situation, with 17 million Yemeni's depending on external aid for their survival, more than 7 million people at the brink of starvation and over 2.2 million children acutely malnourished and particularly vulnerable."

"The humanitarian situation is a direct consequence of more than two years

of conflict which have severely affected access to health, water and sanitation systems. We call on all conflict parties to grant unhindered access to humanitarian organizations and people in need of assistance and recall the obligation under International Humanitarian Law to remove any obstacles and bureaucratic hurdles and to facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need."

However, humanitarian aid cannot alone solve the crisis. A political solution, where women are included throughout the process, is the only way to reach long term and sustainable peace and development. It is important to mainstream gender equality as women's involvement increases effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and changes of successful peace agreements. Sweden and The Netherlands will engage partners to renew the call for an immediate cessation of hostilities to ensure the humanitarian access the country so desperately needs. A cessation of hostilities monitored by the United Nations as a first step towards the resumption of peace talks under UN leadership. All international and regional actors need to engage constructively with Yemeni parties to enable a de-escalation of the conflict and a negotiated settlement that respects the independence, unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yemen. Both ministers recall the recent UN Security Council Presidential Statement calling on parties in Yemen to engage constructively in a good-faith effort for conflict resolution.

Parties to the conflict must allow commercial flights into Sana'a airport and unlock the economic potential of the country and its people. All airports (including Aden) and ports across the country need to function properly, and salaries of civil servants including medical personnel need to be paid. In this regard, both ministers recall the Security Council's call on all parties to engage constructively with the Special Envoy's latest proposals for increasing commercial and humanitarian shipments through Red Sea ports including new arrangements for the management of Hodeida port and city.

Sweden and The Netherlands also recall the recent UN Security Council Presidential Statement calling for immediate mobilization of the funds pledged to Yemen at the Geneva pledging conference of 25 April 2017, hosted by the United Nations Secretary-General together with the governments of Sweden and Switzerland, and full funding of the United Nations 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan for Yemen as part of a coordinated international response to the crisis. The Netherlands continues to support UNICEF and WHO with unearmarked contributions of over EUR 23 million in addition to humanitarian funding for Yemen of EUR 20 million in 2017 alone. Likewise Sweden continues to support UNICEF and WHO

with unearmarked contributions of over EUR 63 million in 2017 in addition to humanitarian funding for Yemen of EUR 23 million in 2017 alone.

"We remain deeply concerned about the continued allegations of violations and abuses of international human rights and applicable international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict. We recall that the reported attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, funerals, population centers and markets are unacceptable. So are the continued recruitment of children, the abduction of civilians and alleged violations of political and civil rights, and the significant increase in reports of sexual and gender-based violence. We urge all parties to the conflict to fully respect international human rights and humanitarian law. We continue to strongly support the call for an international independent investigation into all alleged violations and abuses, with a view to ending impunity for crimes committed by all parties to the conflict."

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

Bert Koenders, Minister of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Written statement on the release of Johan Gustafsson

Published 26 June 2017

I am extremely pleased to be able to announce that today Johan Gustafsson has been able to return to Sweden and reunite with his family.

Johan's situation has affected many of us, and extensive efforts have been made to secure his release.

In particular, the Government would like to highlight the effective collaboration between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Swedish Police Authority National Operations Department and other Swedish and foreign authorities.

This collaboration has now resulted in Johan being able to return home.

I would like to urge everyone to show consideration for Johan and his family and to respect their wishes concerning when and whether they will choose to make a statement.

**Margot Wallström**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement regarding Palestine - 50 years since the Six-Day War

Published 10 June 2017

This week marks 50 years since the 1967 Six-Day War, which resulted in Israel's occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza and the Syrian Golan. This occupation has resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians as well as Syrians. As UN Secretary-General António Guterres has stated: "The occupation has shaped the lives of both Palestinians and Israelis. It has fuelled recurring cycles of violence and retribution. Its perpetuation is sending an unmistakable message to generations of Palestinians that their dream of statehood is destined to remain just that, a dream; and to Israelis that their desire for peace, security and regional recognition remains unattainable."

The international community remains clear in its stance on the occupation and the need for a two-state solution. The UN Security Council has declared that Israel must leave the territory occupied in 1967, and that settlements in occupied territory constitute a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-state solution. The EU has emphasized that the only way to resolve the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is through an agreement on a two-state solution that ends the occupation which began in 1967.

Sweden's long-standing engagement on the Middle East Peace Process is based on international law. An independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian state, living side by side with Israel in peace and security, and with Jerusalem as capital of both states, is needed for a sustainable two-state solution. This, and the aim of making the parties less unequal, was the main reasons why Sweden decided to recognise the State of Palestine in 2014. But we also wanted to give hope particularly to the young Palestinians, hope that a solution is not a fading vision but a reality that can be reached. As a member of the EU and currently also of the UN Security

Council, we are engaging to make sure the international community fulfils its crucial role and implements the UNSC resolutions. Sweden is also working with civil society in both Palestine and Israel on the crucial role of civil society in the two-state solution and in a resumed peace process. For sustainable peace, inclusiveness is key, and civil society, women and youth must be involved.

The 50 year mark also reminds us of the responsibilities of the international community and that it should accompany the parties to solve the conflict and reach a final status solution. Ending the occupation through meaningful negotiations is the only way forward. And, it is a matter of great urgency.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström regarding recent events in Macedonia

Published 30 April 2017

Newly elected Speaker of Parliament in Macedonia must be respected. The Speaker was elected by the parliamentary majority and I look forward to cooperating with him. Sweden strongly condemns the shocking acts of violence which followed his election on Thursday. This is totally unacceptable in a democracy and the persons responsible have to be brought to justice.

The next step now is to form a new government as soon as possible in Macedonia, where early parliamentary elections were held mid December. The door to EU stands open for the countries of Western Balkan, including Macedonia. Urgent reforms are needed in the country and there should be no obstacles for the majority in the parliament to form a new government.





Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström

Published 28 April 2017

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are high. The situation is of great concern for the region and for the wider world. There is a heightened risk of mistakes, misunderstandings and miscalculations.

Today, the UN Security Council met at ministerial level to discuss the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) under the chairmanship of US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. There was unanimity amongst Council members on the need to continue to put pressure on the DPRK regime, to effectively implement Security Council sanctions, and that the DPRK must immediately undertake a complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of their nuclear and missile programme. Council members also stressed the need to reduce tensions on the Korean Peninsula, and for a comprehensive political solution to the situation.

Sweden unequivocally condemned the DPRK's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programme, and echoed calls for its immediate dismantling. We stressed that sanctions must be fully implemented, but that sanctions alone will not resolve the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

Sweden underlined the urgent need for intensified and creative diplomatic efforts. The DPRK must re-engage in a credible and meaningful dialogue with the international community. We must be prepared to consider both new and previous proposals and agreements. Sweden is ready to do its part.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement from Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström

Published 07 April 2017

The chemical weapons attack against civilians in Syria was abhorrent. Last night, under Swedish leadership and together with nine other countries on the Security Council, we tried to agree on a resolution on a serious investigation of this outrage so that those responsible could be held to account. We regret that it was not possible to reach an agreement among the permanent members. We are willing to continue this work.

It is unclear whether the missile attack last night represents a new US policy. It is important that action is supported by international law, but last night's missile attack also raises issues of how this can be compatible with international law.

The issue must therefore return to the Security Council, which must take responsibility for achieving a sustainable political solution. There is already excessive armed force in Syria. It is high time that the Syrian people are allowed to determine their own future.



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström comments on the MONUSCO resolution

Published 31 March 2017

I welcome the UN Security Council's adoption today of a resolution extending MONUSCO, the UN peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

This UN force plays an important stabilising role in the extremely fragile political, humanitarian and security situation in the country. The terrible crime against Zaida Catalán and her colleagues, while she was carrying out her UN assignment for peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, shows that the challenges facing the country continue to be enormous.

In light of reports of human rights violations and increasing levels of violence, it is of great importance that the Security Council has agreed to give the initiative a robust, effective and updated mandate with two clear priorities: protection of civilians and support to the political process.

At Sweden's initiative, the Security Council has also stressed the importance of women being given a voice and of the UN strengthening its efforts to attack the root causes of conflict, including the need for good and democratic governance.

The Security Council makes clear that a political solution is essential and that the Congolese Government bears the ultimate responsibility for protecting its own people and for security in the country.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström

Published 29 March 2017

Today, many of us are mourning the death of Zaida Catalán. My thoughts go first and foremost to her family, who have suffered great uncertainty and last night received this terrible news. We share their loss and despair. Our thoughts also go to the US national and the Congolese nationals who have been affected.

Zaida Catalán lost her life while working for the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Her work was characterised by courage and engagement. As the Prime Minister and I said earlier, it is now imperative that the incident be investigated without delay and that those responsible can be held accountable.

The Government and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will do everything we can to actively assist in the forthcoming investigation. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has also had a meeting with the Swedish Police, who have today initiated a preliminary investigation. We are in close contact with the United Nations in New York and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through the UN MONUSCO mission, and also with US representatives. We are also in dialogue with the Congolese authorities, who are responsible for investigating crimes committed on their territory. A number of meetings with these parties have been held today. In all our talks we emphasise the importance of a proper and prompt investigation.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs will continue to remain in close contact with Zaida Catalán's family.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs 2017

Published 27 March 2017

On Wednesday 15 February 2017, Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström presented the Statement of Foreign Policy to the Riksdag. Check against delivery.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sweden and the world are experiencing a paradoxical time of rapid and significant change.

Ten years ago, the number of displaced people was half of today's 65 million. Syria was a tourist destination. Russia had not attempted to change the borders of Georgia and Ukraine by force.

China's economy was a quarter of the size it is today. Brexit was an unknown term. There were no tweets from the President of the United States because Twitter had only just been created.

Rapid global change can spread liquid fear – and at the same time lay the foundation for crucial progress. For every minute I speak, some 120 people are lifting themselves out of extreme poverty. The Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda provide a roadmap for a sustainable future. Thanks to the peace agreement in Colombia, South America can become a continent of peace.

There is a legend that serves as a parable for these times, when amidst the darkness there are glimmers of light.

A grandfather says to his grandchild: "There is a battle between two wolves inside me. One is evil; he is arrogance, ego, lies and despair. The other is good; he is peace, compassion, truth and hope. This battle is inside us all."

The grandchild asks: "Which wolf wins?" The grandfather replies: "The one you feed."

In difficult times, Sweden's foreign policy rests on a solid value-based foundation of human rights, democracy and multilateral cooperation. Simply putting one's own country first would be selfish and unwise. What is good for the world is good for Sweden.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

After the war ended in 1945, a multilateral world order was created, founded on universal values. As global 'centres of gravity' shift, the world order we have become accustomed to is being challenged. Norms, power balances and global stability are being affected.

To navigate today's global challenges we need to consider how peace, freedom and reconciliation can be achieved in our part of the world. This is why the European Union remains so important to us, and the Government will work vigorously for an EU that is cohesive and principled.

Developments in the EU and in the world around us are putting the European project to the test. Economic recovery is uneven; xenophobic and populist forces have gained ground.

Later this year, our Prime Minister and the President of the European Commission will host a summit in Gothenburg on fair jobs and growth. We need a more social Europe, with functioning labour markets, effective and sustainable social protection systems and improved social dialogue.

Migration issues have become increasingly important and the EU must act together for a sustainable European asylum system based on a fair sharing of responsibility by all Member States. We need to sharpen the focus on the root causes of displacement and on conflict prevention, and increase support to the UN Refugee Agency and the International Organisation for Migration.

The Government regrets that the United Kingdom has chosen to leave the European Union, and we want our good relations to continue. When negotiations begin we will act on the basis of what best serves the common European project and Swedish interests.

The EU is our most important foreign policy arena. The EU Global Strategy will play an important role in crisis management capacity using both civilian and military means. Sweden will actively seek to strengthen the Common Security and Defence Policy. We welcome the strengthening of EU-NATO cooperation, and we want the EU to work even more closely with the UN.

The Government gives priority to both a stronger Eastern Partnership and continued enlargement processes in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

Cooperation with Turkey remains strategically important for the EU, but developments in the country in terms of human rights, respect for the rule of law, and the situation of the opposition and the media are deeply worrying. The peace process to resolve the Kurdish issue must be resumed. This would contribute to peace and security both in Turkey and regionally.

The reunification of Cyprus is within reach. We encourage the parties to continue their efforts to achieve this goal.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Common security – building security in collaboration with other countries and organisations – is a cornerstone of Sweden's security policy.

Sweden's foreign and security policy builds on cohesion in the EU and on increased cooperation on a broad front: in the Nordic region and the Baltic Sea region, in the UN and the OSCE, with NATO and via a strong transatlantic link.

Sweden's security policy remains firmly in place. Our non-participation in military alliances serves us well, and contributes to stability and security in northern Europe. It requires an active, broad and responsible foreign and security policy combined with enhanced defence cooperation, particularly with Finland, and credible national defence capabilities.

Sweden will not remain passive if another EU Member State or Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack. We expect these countries to act in the same way if Sweden is affected. Our country must therefore be in a position to both give and receive support, civilian as well as military.

Our first line of defence consists of a foreign policy that we pursue through diplomacy, mediation, conflict prevention and confidence-building. This increases Sweden's ability to promote détente and stability both in our neighbourhood and globally.

Conditions for protecting the population and maintaining critical infrastructure have changed. Military threats, armed conflicts, cyber threats, terrorism, violent extremism and organised crime create continuous risks in an increasingly complex and interconnected world, but pandemics, antibiotic resistance and natural disasters also affect Sweden's security. To respond to these developments, in January the Government adopted a national security strategy based on our national interests.

Modern society is increasingly dependent on a secure energy supply and robust transport and infrastructure. Climate change is a threat to human existence. Inequality, environmental threats, water issues and resource scarcity are other long-term challenges. The implementation of the strategy is a priority and lays the foundation for enhanced security efforts.

The brutal terrorist attacks around the world underscore the need for deeper cross-border cooperation based on solidarity. International cooperation also facilitates efforts to prevent radicalisation.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

In view of the serious international situation, the Government is urging global actors such as the United States, China, India and Russia to take greater responsibility – both towards each other and towards the rest of the world.

Russia's behaviour, when manifested in military action, disinformation and influence operations, remains aggressive and increases tensions. Our response is guided by principles and values, is firm, clear and long-term, and fosters EU unity. The foundation of our approach is a desire to stand up for international law and the European security order.

Domestic political developments in Russia are also regressive, with authoritarian rule, civil society under pressure and a lack of respect for human rights.

Sweden needs a broad approach in relation to Russia. We will maintain a political dialogue, take a long-term view, urge Russia to pursue cooperation rather than confrontation, and promote people-to-people contacts. And we will do so without compromising our principles-based stance.

Sweden condemns Russia's aggression towards Ukraine and its illegal annexation of Crimea. The sanctions must remain in place for as long as the



reasons for their introduction remain. By supporting Ukraine's reform efforts and standing up for the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity under international law, we will contribute to its aspiration to move closer to the EU.

This year, Sweden will take over the Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States. We want to see a Baltic Sea region characterised by respect, trust and security. Cooperation to increase security and tackle challenges such as environmental threats will be promoted, along with better conditions for regional development and contacts between citizens.

Sweden enjoys, and will continue to enjoy, close relations with the United States. Relations with the new US administration remain important for our trade and our security. But the White House's actions raise questions about the role of the United States in the world.

We believe that Sweden, the EU and the US have everything to gain from working for a rules-based world order, from standing up for our common norms and values, and tackling global challenges together.

This is how we will act – with our neighbours, in a coordinated manner within the EU, and with other like-minded countries.

Canada is becoming an increasingly important partner for both Sweden and the EU, not least through the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and the Strategic Partnership Agreement.

Our aim of renewing contacts with Latin America has been welcomed in the region, and in the next few months we will present an action plan for increased cooperation.

Asia is the growth engine of the global economy, and major investments are being made there in the technologies of the future. Our engagement in Asia aims to contribute both to sustainable development and to democracy and respect for human rights.

Relations with China are developing, but the regional security policy tensions and democratic and human rights situation are a cause for concern.

Sweden's cooperation with India is deepening. The EU's free trade negotiations with several ASEAN countries are welcome, and we are working for an ambitious agreement with Japan.

Sweden continues to work for Afghanistan's peaceful and sustainable development. We are maintaining our civilian and military engagement, and we support women's participation in peace and reconciliation processes.

In 2017, the Government intends to adopt a new strategy for development cooperation with Myanmar. It may contribute to peaceful, inclusive and democratic developments in the country, including for the Rohingya minority.

Sweden's strong ties to the countries of Africa are being further developed as the demand for diversified trade and modern development cooperation increases.

Concrete contributions to peace, security and development are being made via our long-term development cooperation, but also through our troop contribution to MINUSMA in Mali and our participation in EU operations in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. We are strengthening our partnership with the African Union and the sub-regional organisations in efforts to prevent armed conflict.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The Syrian regime and its allies have employed a brutal military strategy. Sweden is engaged in helping to find a long-term solution, in part by giving women a voice in the peace process. Our extensive aid comprises both immediate emergency relief and long-term support, including to neighbouring countries that have taken in a large number of refugees.

The UN must play a central role. Our seat on the Security Council offers a forum in which we can work for a ceasefire, humanitarian access, a return to peace negotiations, and accountability for war crimes, serious violations and the use of chemical weapons.

In the first half of this year, the Government intends to produce a new five-year aid strategy for Iraq. Our contribution to the Global Coalition against Daesh will double, from 35 to 70 people.

This year marks 50 years of the occupation of Palestine. Sweden continues to work for a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and will appoint a special envoy.

When I visited Palestine in December it was noticeable that hope can turn to despair, and this features heavily in the consultations that Sweden is holding

with almost 150 Israeli and Palestinian civil society organisations.

Security Council resolution 2334 on the Israeli settlements, and the international conference held in Paris in January, could, in the best-case scenario, create the conditions for a renewed peace process and a two-state solution.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden's feminist foreign policy is producing results for women, girls and entire societies.

Our efforts have contributed to some 20 countries drawing up laws and proposals to strengthen gender equality, to hundreds of thousands of women and girls avoiding unsafe abortions and unwanted pregnancies, to some 90 local communities abandoning the practice of female genital mutilation and to 65 countries and organisations making commitments to combat gender-based violence. Sexual and reproductive health and rights will be an even higher priority.

A new national action plan for the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, our Chairmanship of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, a strategic initiative on dialogue and peace processes, and a women's mediation network are some of the elements of our work for peace, security and sustainable development.

The fact that we were elected to the UN Security Council by such a wide margin is a testament to the Government's global policy. During Sweden's Presidency in January, it became clear that UN Secretary-General António Guterres supports our ambition for the UN to promote peacebuilding and conflict prevention, dialogue as a tool, and the active participation of women in peace processes.

We are a critical friend of the UN, working for a reformed and more transparent Security Council. A more modern, more effective and gender-equal UN system is crucial. We will spearhead the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, both globally and in Sweden. All policy areas must contribute to a sustainable and fair world.

The aim of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is a world free of nuclear weapons. Any move away from this aim must be

prevented, and nuclear-weapon states have a particular responsibility in this context. The Government welcomes the fact that a clear majority of the world's countries have taken a stand for negotiations on a global nuclear weapons ban.

The nuclear accord with Iran is of crucial importance to non-proliferation efforts. North Korea is defying the international community with its nuclear weapons ambitions.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Sweden is and will remain a global leader in development policy. Our SEK 6.5 billion in humanitarian aid makes us the world's seventh largest donor in nominal terms. Peacebuilding and statebuilding are at the heart of Swedish aid: without peace there can be no development.

The oceans play a crucial role in the global climate system; if current trends are not halted, by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in the sea. In June, Sweden and Fiji will host the first major UN conference on saving the global marine environment.

Alarming climate change reports reach us with increasing frequency. In 2017, Sweden and the EU must demonstrate leadership in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Sweden will be one of the first fossil-free welfare nations. Our contributions to climate action in developing countries are among the largest in the world and thereby play a significant role in other countries' transition.

The Government has reinforced action for sustainable development and cooperation in the Arctic, where in November last year the sea ice shrank by an area twice the size of Sweden.

We are working for better global responsibility-sharing and governance on migration and refugee issues. The fight against human trafficking is being stepped up.

The Government stands firm in its intention that development aid will reach 1 per cent of Sweden's gross national income during this electoral period. The principles that will underpin our development cooperation have been presented to the Riksdag in a written communication.

And should anyone wonder whether these investments are worth our taxpayers' money, I say: have you calculated the cost of war, poverty and

the death of our oceans?

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Greater equality in the labour market, decent working conditions, increased productivity and inclusive economic growth are important objectives for Sweden. The Prime Minister's Global Deal initiative is being followed up in cooperation with the ILO, the OECD and others.

At a time when protectionism is on the rise and free trade is being called into question, Sweden is standing up for free and fair global trade with the WTO multilateral trade system as the backbone. The Government will push for the EU to conclude progressive free trade agreements that safeguard social rights, environmental protection, animal welfare and human health.

Sweden is one of the world's most competitive countries, and its exports employ almost one and a half million people. Seventy-one per cent of Swedish exports go to the EU. We are thus contributing to deepening the EU single market. We want to dismantle trade barriers, benefit from the free movement of goods and services, harness the opportunities offered by the increasingly digital economy, and thus promote new business models and greater innovation. Our foreign trade continues to be strengthened by Sweden's export strategy, regional export centres and Team Sweden.

Sweden will maintain strict and effective export controls of military equipment, and the Government will present a bill on this in the first half of this year to tighten the export regulations to non-democracies.

Support to Swedes in emergency or crisis situations abroad and work on individual consular cases are perpetual activities of the Swedish Foreign Service that are always a priority, regardless of the level of public attention a matter receives.

Our efforts to strengthen respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law were presented in the written communication submitted to the Riksdag in December. New country-specific reports on the situation in all regions of the world will be presented in the first half of this year.

These reports highlight issues such as the right to reasonable remuneration for work, discriminatory legislation, violence against women, racism, and discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc.

Free speech is under attack around the world; journalists and human rights defenders are being imprisoned and persecuted. Sweden supports those affected and works to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice.

Mr/Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

In 2016, 'post-truth' was named Word of the Year by Oxford Dictionaries.

Both functioning democracy and constructive cooperation between states require us to speak with, and not about, each other, to honour agreements and to allow ideas to compete. They also require us to respect science, facts and the media, and to acknowledge each other's wisdom.

I would therefore like to conclude the Statement of Foreign Policy by thanking the Left Party for continually reminding us about the troubling developments in Turkey.

That Sweden must emphasise human rights in its contacts with the rest of the world is something the Liberal Party never lets us forget.

In the battle against what may be humanity's worst invention – nuclear weapons – we can count on the Centre Party.

The Moderate Party is and has been a driving force when Sweden stands up for free trade.

And throughout the years, Swedish aid has had a dependable friend in the Christian Democrats.

The Government does not share the basic values or world view of the Sweden Democrats, and cooperation is out of the question, but we respect your place in the Riksdag.

Thank you to all the driving forces in civil society and in popular movements. Your efforts on the ground and in shaping public opinion make a difference in these difficult times.

We will meet again in searching conversations about how Sweden can contribute to a world founded on human dignity, where despair is conquered by hope.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Margot Wallström regarding the Dutch election result

Published 16 March 2017

We congratulate the VVD Party and its leader Mark Rutte for again becoming the largest party in the Dutch parliamentary election.

The election result shows that the Dutch people have rejected populism and instead voted in favour of an inclusive and open society. Sweden and the Netherlands both work for openness, human rights and a strong Europe.

We look forward to a new government being formed and to cooperation with the Netherlands continuing to be developed and deepened, both within the EU and globally.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström regarding today's vote in the UN Security Council on a resolution on accountability for chemical weapons use in Syria

Published 28 February 2017

I deeply regret the Russian and Chinese veto against the resolution on chemical weapons use in Syria that was submitted today to the UN Security Council with the support of the Council's majority. Accountability is an important principle, and the Council has a special responsibility to act on the conclusions of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) that both the Syrian regime and the terrorist organisation Daesh have used chemical weapons repeatedly in the conflict. The Swedish Government condemns all use of chemical weapons in the strongest terms; it is totally unacceptable, in violation of international law, and may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity. Moreover, Syria has acted in non-compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Swedish Government will continue to promote accountability for



serious international crimes committed in connection with the Syria conflict, through active engagement in both the United Nations and the European Union. Last week, for instance, we decided to contribute SEK 2 000 000 to the UN Trust Fund for the JIM.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement on President Trump's reference to Sweden

Published 20 February 2017 Updated 20 February 2017

It is good that we received clarification yesterday of what President Trump meant when he mentioned Sweden in a speech. We maintain continuous diplomatic contacts with US representatives, and in these contacts we keep them informed of the situation in Sweden in various areas.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sweden's embassies work continuously to disseminate an accurate and fair image of Sweden. Unfortunately, we are seeing a general upward trend in inaccurate information.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement regarding Israeli decision to confiscate privately owned Palestinian land

Published 07 February 2017 Updated 07 February 2017

The Government condemns the Knesset decision yesterday to illegally confiscate privately owned Palestinian land. The decision is a flagrant violation under international law and Security Council resolution 2334, and raises serious doubts about Israel's willingness to reach a two-state solution. If the decision is implemented, it will seriously undermine the two-state solution. The UN, the EU and the Quartet (the UN, the EU, the United States and Russia) have repeatedly called on Israel to abandon its settlement policy and promote a meaningful peace process.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement on Israel's decision concerning settlement units on occupied territory

Published 01 February 2017 Updated 01 February 2017

The Swedish Government strongly condemns the Israeli announcements made of plans for a total of more than 6 000 settlement units on occupied territory. The settlements constitute a flagrant violation under international law and contravene Security Council resolution 2334 on Israeli settlements, adopted on 23 December 2016.

In the resolution, the Security Council repeated its demand that Israel immediately freeze all settlement activity. The issue was discussed again in the Security Council on 25 January under the Swedish Presidency. The international community is united in its view that the settlements are illegal, and a serious impediment to the two-state solution. The announcements also contravene the express recommendations made to the parties by the Quartet (UN, EU, US and Russia).

The fact that some of the settlement units are planned in East Jerusalem is highly problematic. As long ago as 1947, Jerusalem was given a special legal and political status by the UN, which all countries should respect. It is important not to pre-empt the results of peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine, and to protect Jerusalem's future status as the shared capital of two states.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on the new rules for entry to the United States

Published 01 February 2017 Updated 01 February 2017

"We welcome the clarification of how the new rules for entry to the United States are to be applied, and the fact that Swedish citizens – including those with dual citizenship – can travel to the US. Nonetheless, we still take a critical stance on the decision to completely ban entry for citizens of seven countries, and for refugees."



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement on the adoption of a Security Council Presidential Statement on the Democratic Republic of Congo

Published 04 January 2017 Updated 04 January 2017

On 4 January, the Security Council adopted a statement welcoming the political agreement signed on 31 December in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Sweden welcomes the broad political agreement, mediated by the Catholic Church, on a path to political elections in the DRC. Under the terms of the agreement, President Kabila will not seek a third term, the constitution will not be changed, and elections will be held in 2017.

All parties must now help ensure that the agreement is implemented in an inclusive manner. Agreement must be reached as soon as possible on outstanding issues, including the timetable for implementation of the agreement and vital follow-up mechanisms. The effective participation of women and men in the political process must be ensured, in accordance with their fundamental rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of assembly.

The constructive role played in the DRC by the African Union (AU) and other regional actors remains crucial. Bilaterally, through the EU and as a member of the UN Security Council, Sweden will continue to work actively for peaceful development and democratic elections in the DRC.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on the situation in Aleppo

Published 15 December 2016 Updated 15 December 2016

After months of siege and indiscriminate bombing of the civilian population, the opposition in the eastern parts of Aleppo have lost, but the violence continues. According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, at least 82 people have been killed in extrajudicial executions since 11 December. UNICEF has reported that 100 unaccompanied children are trapped in a building, under heavy attack in east Aleppo. Thousands of people are fleeing the indiscriminate bombing. An agreement on evacuation of the last of the rebels appears to have been impeded following objections from Iran. The Syrian regime and its allies are responsible for the atrocities now being committed.

The conflict in Syria has been characterised by extreme violence and atrocities in violation of the law of war and probably constitute war crimes. The Syrian regime, with Russian support, has bombed civilian areas indiscriminately; hospitals and schools have been subjected to targeted attacks, as was a humanitarian convoy. We also condemn the besieged opposition's shelling of western Aleppo, even if the proportions are not comparable.

We cannot allow this to happen without reacting strongly. In the immediate perspective, the international community must continue to demand that the

fighting ceases, the siege is lifted and humanitarian organisations are given full access to those in need. In the longer perspective, we must take action to ensure that those responsible for the atrocities are held to account for their actions. We must actively collect evidence and testimonies, and ensure that accountability can be demanded. Sweden will look over the possibilities available to us for stepping up prosecution of war crimes at national level and in cooperation with other EU countries.

Sweden has provided some SEK 2.3 billion in humanitarian aid since 2011 and is currently working to assist refugees and communities that receive refugees with long-term support through our Syria crisis strategy, which encompasses SEK 1.7 billion over five years. We have also supported the UN's efforts to find a peaceful solution and have sought to ensure that women and civil society can take part in a peace process. We have taken in some 120 000 asylum seekers from Syria. However, it is clear that what is happening in Syria is a global responsibility. We will continue to pursue issues related to Syria during our membership of the UN Security Council.





Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on the arrests in Turkey

Published 04 November 2016 Updated 04 November 2016

The arrest of the two leaders of Turkish opposition party People's Democratic Party (HDP), Figen Yüksekdağ and Selahattin Demirtaş, and a number of other party members early this morning is extremely worrying. This cannot be regarded as an isolated incident but rather as a continuation of measures taken against representatives of the HDP. We expect these democratically elected representatives to be released. These arrests risk fueling existing tensions in the country. They follow earlier arrests of civil society and media representatives, most recently of the editor-in-chief of the Cumhuriyet newspaper. Media freedom and opposition are essential for a pluralistic democratic society. The attacks on these groups therefore send an ominous signal.

It is important that Turkey return to normalisation and that the dialogue between the opposition and the Government is resumed. A return to the peace process with the PKK is essential for the country's continued democratisation and stability in the region. It is important that the EU Member States act together to ensure that human rights and the rule of law are upheld in Turkey.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the result of the referendum in Colombia

Published 03 October 2016 Updated 03 October 2016

The result of the referendum in Colombia announced overnight leaves no one unmoved. We now hope that the talks at the highest level between the yes and no sides will lead to an agreement in favour of a peaceful solution to the armed conflict that has affected so many women, men and children. I welcome the fact that all parties have indicated their willingness to continue the peace talks.

I visited Colombia only last week on the occasion of the signing of the peace agreement. The discussions I had there, including with women who had been affected by the conflict, made it clear that peace and reconciliation are the only way forward.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the bombardment of Aleppo

Published 27 September 2016 Updated 27 September 2016

The indiscriminate bombardment of eastern Aleppo by the Syrian regime and Russia on Friday and Saturday has reached horrific heights and must stop. Incendiary bombs and bunker-busting bombs are being used and the civilian death toll is high. The images of children being dug out of the rubble and of overwhelmed hospitals with blood-covered people lying in a heap on the floor are unbearable.

Sweden supports the UN Security Council taking urgent further steps to address the brutality of this conflict, and particularly the assault on Aleppo.



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement regarding attack on humanitarian convoy in Syria

Published 20 September 2016 Updated 20 September 2016

I am deeply disturbed by the news that a humanitarian convoy has been bombed, in what appears to be a deliberate attack, in Urm al-Kubra last night. The attacks on the convoys belonging to Syrian Red Crescent in Urm al-Kubra is completely unacceptable and may amount to a war crime.

The important work of humanitarian organizations must be respected and cannot be hindered by violence. International humanitarian law states that medical personnel and civilians must be protected and that states have an obligation to investigate alleged violations of humanitarian law.

This callous attack was not only an attack on the convoy with aid for suffering Syrians or the courageous aid workers and civilians who so senselessly lost their lives. This was also an attack against neutral humanitarian assistance everywhere. Impunity against these crimes must end immediately. I call on the parties to immediately implement Security Council resolution 2268 to allow humanitarian agencies rapid, safe and unhindered access throughout Syria by most direct routes, allow immediate, humanitarian assistance to reach all people in need, in particular in all besieged and hard-to-reach areas. All parties must immediately comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law as applicable.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# The Arctic Council: A Forum for Peace and Cooperation

Published 19 September 2016 Updated 19 September 2016

**A joint statement from Ministers of the Arctic States on the occasion of the Arctic Council's 20th anniversary.**

On September 19, 1996 in Ottawa, the Arctic Council was established as a high level intergovernmental forum to enhance cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States with the active involvement of Arctic indigenous peoples and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues. Today, we celebrate twenty years of Arctic cooperation and look forward to a long term future of peace and stability in the region.

Over the past twenty years Arctic cooperation has come a long way, from ground-breaking studies and reports to the realization of programs and projects with important concrete outcomes. Continuing our long term efforts to address climate change impacts in the Arctic, we recognize the need for urgent global action based on the 2015 Paris Agreement. Our work aims to improve the well-being of Arctic residents, protect the Arctic environment, and promote sustainable development throughout the region including maintaining the cultural heritage and livelihoods of Arctic indigenous peoples.

Arctic cooperation encompasses all aspects of life and activity in the region. The Arctic Council is at the forefront of this cooperation and has become the most important body for promoting a positive agenda and coordinating joint action on all vital issues in the region. The success of the Arctic Council can also be attributed to the active participation of the indigenous Permanent Participants.

The Arctic Council has played a leading role in delivering world-class scientific assessments, addressing the impacts of globalization and climate

change, and facilitating cooperative responses to these challenges. The Council's work has contributed to the conclusion of the International Maritime Organization's "Polar Code", the "Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants," the "Minamata Convention on Mercury" and others.

The Arctic Council has engaged in many important joint actions such as the "Framework Plan for Cooperation on Prevention of Oil Pollution from Petroleum and Maritime Activities in the Marine Areas of the Arctic," the "Framework for a Pan-Arctic Network of Marine Protected Areas," the "Framework for Action on Black Carbon and Methane," and the "Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program," and is promoting mental wellness across the Arctic. The launch of the Project Support Instrument in July 2014 is further facilitating protection of the Arctic environment by providing financial support to pollution mitigation projects.

Two legally binding pan-Arctic agreements concluded under the auspices of the Arctic Council, the "Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic" and the "Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic," are important developments and have strengthened Arctic cooperation.

The Arctic Council has facilitated the creation of additional structures for regional cooperation and interaction such as the University of the Arctic, the Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks forum, the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, the Arctic Economic Council, and the Arctic Offshore Regulators Forum.

Recognizing our special responsibility and leadership role in ensuring environmental protection and sustainable development, we consider cooperation under the auspices of the Arctic Council as an opportunity to encourage constructive input from accredited observers and other interested stakeholders.

On this twentieth anniversary of the Arctic Council, we the Arctic States reaffirm our commitment to the principles of the Ottawa Declaration, to work together and with the indigenous Permanent Participants, and to promote prosperity, development, and environmental sustainability for the benefit of generations to come.

For Canada, Stéphane Dion, Minister of Foreign Affairs

For the Kingdom of Denmark, Kristian Jensen, Minister for Foreign Affairs

For Finland, Timo Soini, Minister for Foreign Affairs

For Iceland, Lilja Alfreðsdóttir, Minister for Foreign Affairs

For Norway, Børge Brende, Minister of Foreign Affairs

For the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs

For Sweden, Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs

For the United States of America, John F. Kerry, Secretary of State



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement from the Minister for Foreign Affairs regarding North Korea's fifth nuclear test

Published 09 September 2016 Updated 09 September 2016

Sweden condemns the nuclear test that North Korea is reported to have conducted and which follows a number of provocative missile launches this year. The Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organisation's (CTBTO) monitoring mechanism is analysing the incident.

North Korea's defiant behaviour this year involving serious and provocative actions jeopardises international peace and security. The situation on the Korean peninsula is serious and the latest test further aggravates it.

Sweden urges North Korea to cease activities that aggravate the security situation, and to fulfil its international obligations and respect the UN Security Council's resolutions and the principles of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Sweden supports this morning's statements by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, and the CTBTO's Executive Secretary, Lassina Zerbo.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström

[Link to the statement by Lassina Zerbo](#)

[Link to the statement by Federica Mogherini](#)





Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs concerning the UN Security Council debate on the joint UN-OPCW report on incidents involving the use of chemical weapons in Syria

Published 31 August 2016 Updated 31 August 2016

Yesterday, the UN Security Council discussed the report of the UN/OPCW Joint Investigatory Mechanism, regarding the responsibility for the repeated attacks with chemical weapons in the conflict in Syria since 2014.

The report states unequivocally that the Syrian regime is responsible for at least two attacks with chemical weapons, and that Da'esh is accountable for at least one such attack. It is now up to the international community to take action, and to make sure that those responsible are brought to justice. The use of chemical weapons is unacceptable and must not be perpetrated with impunity.

I welcome the report, to which Sweden has contributed financially and also technically through analyses performed by the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) in Umeå and the National Forensic Centre (NFC) in Linköping.

Sweden will continue to monitor the issue and contribute to its continued treatment.



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden has been elected to the UN Security Council

Published 28 June 2016 Updated 28 June 2016

## Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on the election of Sweden to serve on the UN Security Council 2017-2018.

On Tuesday Sweden was convincingly elected to the United Nations Security Council. Six months ago we were considered to be out of the running. Today we have a seat on the Security Council. This is a great victory for Swedish foreign policy and Swedish diplomacy.

For a government that stands for solidarity and cooperation, a seat on the Security Council is an acknowledgement that a global policy for sustainable peace and development pays off. For the United Nations, this means that one of its largest donors is taking its engagement and ideas, along with its demands for reform and change, into the organisation's innermost room.

During our two-year term, we will take our share of responsibility for international peace and security that membership of the Security Council entails. On 1 January 2017, when we take our seat at the table that has become a symbol of world affairs, we will do so as President, at the same time as the next Secretary-General of the United Nations takes office.

Sweden's candidacy was based on issues and on a belief in dialogue and diplomacy as tools. Deeper contacts with many countries around the world have given us a better understanding of how today's challenges are perceived and experienced, but also a basis for advancing our vision of democracy and human rights, gender equality and development. This is also how Sweden will work as a member: we will listen to those concerned, defend those who need to be defended and stand up for those we believe in.

Security, development and gender equality are interlinked. Poor countries run a much greater risk of being affected by conflict. We will work to make the Security Council better at acting before conflicts erupt. We will work to make the Security Council see the nexus between security, development, climate and gender equality. We will work to highlight the perspective of women in conflict situations. Half of the world's population cannot be excluded if we want to achieve sustainable peace.

The UN must become more open – even more open. We want to work for greater transparency and openness in the Security Council. We want to talk with countries, rather than about countries. We want to strengthen dialogue with civil society, women's organisations and other peace actors. This is how to build a peaceful world.

We will deal with issues on the Security Council agenda on the basis of our values. The last time we had a seat on the Security Council, we were always the ones to emphasise international law and human rights. And that's how it will be this time too. The situation in Sweden's neighbourhood and the fact that our European security order is being challenged demonstrate the importance of respect for international rules and principles. This perspective will be central during our two-year term on the Security Council.

In six months' time we will take our seat on the Security Council. We will be doing so at a time when, all around the world, uncertainty and insecurity are taking a toll on people's lives, and the need to work together to build sustainable peace and resilient communities has never been clearer. We will do so because we are convinced that as a small and open country dependent on the rest of the world, it is in our interest to contribute to and defend the international order that has at its core the United Nations and the Security Council. And we will do so because we believe we can make a difference – through our policies, our values and our engagement.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström

Published 23 March 2016 Updated 23 March 2016

I strongly condemn the sentence that was handed down yesterday against Nadiya Savchenko and once again call on Russia to immediately release Ms Savchenko and other Ukrainian nationals who have been illegally detained.

This conviction violates the universal human right to a fair trial and runs counter to Russia's commitments in the Minsk agreements. Russia must respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and international law.

Sweden has called on Russia on numerous occasions, both bilaterally in talks with Russian representatives and through the EU, to immediately release Nadiya Savchenko and other illegally detained Ukrainian nationals.



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on Nadiya Savchenko and other Ukrainian nationals illegally detained in Russia

Published 11 March 2016 Updated 11 March 2016

I call on Russia to immediately release Nadiya Savchenko and other Ukrainian nationals who have been illegally detained and held in custody in violation of the Minsk agreements.

Sweden has called on Russia to immediately release Savchenko and other Ukrainian nationals illegally detained, including Oleg Sentsov and Alexander Kolchenko, on numerous occasions, both bilaterally in talks with Russian representatives and through the EU. As a demonstration of our support, our Embassy in Moscow is following Ms Savchenko's trial in the court room, and we encourage others to do the same. I stressed the efforts being undertaken by Sweden and the EU for the release of Savchenko when I met her sister Vira this fall in Kiev and New York.

Russia must respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and international law. The right to a fair trial is a basic human right.

Savchenko has been illegally detained since June 2014. A verdict is expected on 21–22 March.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement

# Comment on reported hydrogen bomb test by North Korea

Published 06 January 2016 Updated 06 January 2016

The reports of a nuclear test in North Korea are cause for deep concern. If a nuclear test has been carried out, this is a serious and provocative action that jeopardises international peace and security and deserves to be condemned.

A nuclear test is a flagrant violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions and the principles of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Sweden, the EU and the international community call on North Korea to meet its international obligations and to respect United Nations Security Council resolutions and the principles of the CTBT.



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on the CAR review panel report

Published 19 December 2015 Updated 19 December 2015

Like many other people, I was appalled last year to hear about suspected sexual abuse of defenceless children in the Central African Republic, committed by international peacekeeping troops who were put there to protect them. The internal handling of the matter by the United Nations has been deficient and also left much to be desired, including the treatment of individual UN officials, such as Anders Kompass, who had acted against the abuses.

Sweden therefore welcomed the appointment of an independent review panel earlier this year, tasked with investigating UN action to protect the rights of these children as well as the internal handling of the matter. The panel has now submitted its report, which has been published by the UN. This is a very welcome step.

I am also pleased that the panel has concluded that Anders Kompass has not gone beyond the scope of his official mandate.

Throughout, Sweden has emphasised the importance of an unbiased and independent review. It is of the utmost importance to follow up on the report's specific recommendations on how the entire UN system can strengthen its efforts to combat sexual abuse and exploitation in the field. This is a shared responsibility.

We must also, as recommended by the panel, work to ensure that the UN system restores confidence in and the independence of the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services and Ethics Office so as to safeguard the correct and fair treatment of UN officials. Member states also need to make sure

that the perpetrators are punished.





Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Margot Wallström on the adoption of the Security Council resolution on ISIL

Published 21 November 2015 Updated 21 November 2015

Sweden welcomes the adoption of the Security Council resolution today on ISIL. Through the resolution, the international community agrees to enhance efforts to prevent and suppress ISIL's terrorist acts in accordance with international law. Sweden fully supports this.

In the fight against terrorism, it is vital to apply a broad approach. In addition to immediate responses, we must also address the root causes. It remains paramount to establish a process for reaching an inclusive and sustainable political solution to the conflict in Syria.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on the terrorist attacks in Paris

Published 14 November 2015 Updated 14 November 2015

Sweden condemns yesterday's despicable terrorist attacks in Paris. They targeted and killed innocent citizens, and our thoughts go to the victims and their families. These acts of terrorism are an attack on democracy and our open societies. They must and will be met with resolve; terrorism must be opposed and those responsible must be called to account. We also need to tackle the underlying causes of terrorism, taking a long-term approach, and to strengthen our efforts against extremism and fanaticism. Together we must stand up for democracy and for humanistic values.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs

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Déclaration de Margot Wallström, Ministre des Affaires étrangères

La Suède condamne les terribles actes terroristes survenus hier à Paris. Ces actes ont ciblé et tué des citoyens innocents. Nos pensées vont aux victimes et à leurs familles. Ces actes de terrorisme sont une attaque contre la démocratie et nos sociétés ouvertes. Il convient de répondre avec détermination à ces attaques ; nous devons repousser le terrorisme et les responsables doivent répondre de leurs actes. Nous devons également lutter efficacement à long terme contre les causes profondes du terrorisme et renforcer les actions contre l'extrémisme et le fanatisme. Nous devons ensemble défendre la démocratie et les valeurs humanistes.

Margot Wallström, Ministre des Affaires étrangères



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on the elections in Myanmar

Published 13 November 2015 Updated 13 November 2015

I would like to congratulate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy on the overwhelming victory in the parliamentary elections in Myanmar. I have always been hugely impressed by the tireless work and great personal sacrifice Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has been demonstrating for many years now for democracy in Myanmar. The world needs many more people like her.

But above all, I would like to congratulate the people of Myanmar on the success of the election. The result shows that the people of Myanmar voted in favour of change. And they did so in a very dignified and determined manner. The people made this election a landmark event in Myanmar's transition towards democracy.

I am very pleased that the elections were carried out without serious incidents and I would like to commend the excellent work of the election observers. I also acknowledge and welcome the work of the Union Election Commission and the present Government under the leadership of President U Thein Sein. I welcome the assurances from the major stakeholders that the election results will be respected and that talks will be held soon in order to ensure a peaceful transfer of power.

I trust that in future elections we will see the full participation of the Rohingya and that all Muslim candidates can run.

Sweden looks forward to working closely with a new Government of Myanmar. We stand ready to continue our support for true democratisation, inclusive peace and full respect for human rights for all in Myanmar: for

women, men, girls and boys, regardless of ethnicity and religious affiliation.



Statement from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Today we celebrate the United Nations' 70th anniversary and Sweden's UN membership

Published 24 October 2015 Updated 24 October 2015

Today we celebrate United Nations Day. And we are doing so in a world that is more uncertain than for many years and in which the United Nations is needed more than ever. Global crises and challenges require common solutions.

Sweden is ready to assume its share of responsibility. This is why Sweden is strengthening its engagement in the UN and why we are seeking a seat on the Security Council for 2017–2018.

Sweden's UN policy contributes to peace, security, sustainable development and gender equality. It is part of a solidarity-based foreign policy and a means for responding to crises that affect us.

Sweden is one of the top contributors to the UN. We contribute personnel to peace operations, aid, climate financing and humanitarian assistance. Our contributions also include engagement, resources and ideas.

We also set clear requirements for a modern, effective, transparent and legitimate United Nations that is equipped to meet future challenges and take advantage of future opportunities.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on the terrorist attack in Ankara, Turkey, today

Published 10 October 2015 Updated 10 October 2015

I strongly condemn the attacks on peaceful demonstrations that took place today. I send my deepest sympathy to the many people who have lost family members and friends in the attacks.

The fight against terrorism is a shared fight, in which we must all stand united. Today's attack on political demonstrations is also an attack on freedom of expression and the right to demonstrate. It is essential now that the trend towards violence is halted. I call on all parties to take responsibility for a return to stability and a resumption of peace negotiations.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement on detention of ministers in Burkina Faso

Published 17 September 2015 Updated 17 September 2015

The forceful detention of President Kafando and Prime Minister Zida and other ministers in Burkina Faso is unacceptable and violates the legitimate demands of the Burkinabe people for a peaceful and democratic transition.

It is imperative that free and fair elections are held as scheduled on 11 October 2015. Sweden remains a long term partner to the people of Burkina Faso and supports the electoral process with approximately 4,5 Million Euro channeled through the UN system as well as through civil society organisations.





Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# statement on Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Published 05 August 2015 Updated 05 August 2015

Over the next few days, on 6 and 9 August, we mark the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Hundreds of thousands of people paid with their lives due to the bombs, both immediately and much later, and both cities were completely destroyed. The bombs used were relatively weak in comparison with those currently held in the arsenals of nuclear powers. Almost 16 000 nuclear weapons remain.

"We must never forget the victims and the terrible destruction that the human race unleashed on itself. But that is not enough".

"Today, 70 years on, we must act to ensure that no one is ever again affected by such terrible consequences. The only way to fully guarantee this is to totally eliminate all nuclear weapons," says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström

Published 28 July 2015 Updated 28 July 2015

The escalating violence in and around Turkey is deeply worrying.

Sweden condemns once again the attack against innocent civilians in Suruç last week. This was also an attack on the humanitarian responsibility that Turkey and its people have assumed towards refugees from Syria.

Turkey is an important partner for the EU in the fight against terrorism and extremism, and its implementation of necessary measures against ISIL is welcome. However, Sweden emphasises the importance of protecting civilians and the need for proportionality of measures. Sweden urges Turkey and the PKK to observe the ceasefire and to resume peace talks immediately. A stalled peace process in Turkey threatens to further undermine stability in the region.



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on the agreement with Iran on the nuclear issue

Published 14 July 2015 Updated 14 July 2015

Sweden warmly welcomes the agreement on the nuclear issue between Germany, France, the United Kingdom, China, Russia, the United States (EU3+3) and Iran. The agreement is a victory for diplomacy. I would like to express my deep appreciation and that of my Government for the perseverance and determination shown by the parties, and by EU High Representative Federica Mogherini and her predecessors in leading EU3+3 in the negotiations.

Now it is up to all parties to live up to their commitments. Iran needs to show that its nuclear technology programme has exclusively peaceful purposes and the international community must lift sanctions, in accordance with today's agreement. Sweden will do its part in this.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will now take on a key role in verifying compliance with the agreement. Sweden fully supports the IAEA in its important work.

The agreement on the nuclear issue means that a strategic obstacle to the development of international relations with Iran has been removed. Now the way is open for a deeper – and, where necessary, critical – dialogue with Iran, and for increased cooperation.



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Foreign Minister Margot Wallström on the extension of the mandate for the stabilisation mission in Mali (MINUSMA)

Published 30 June 2015 Updated 30 June 2015

I welcome the UN Security Council's extension of the mandate for the stabilisation mission in Mali (MINUSMA) by one more year.

MINUSMA's support to the Mali peace process has been, and continues to be, very important. The mission will also play a key role in supporting the implementation of the agreement for peace and reconciliation, which has now been signed by all the major groups.

We congratulate the parties to the conflict, and Algeria's Minister of Foreign Affairs Ramtane Lamamra, who headed the mediation that reached a political solution to the conflict, and Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta on his leadership. All parties are now responsible for the pledges that have been made and for implementing the peace agreement.

The women of Mali must be given a prominent place in the implementation of the agreement and in the continued reconciliation process. It is admirable and important that the Security Council establishes gender issues as an overall responsibility for MINUSMA.

The Swedish commitment to peace and development in Mali, and to strengthening women's rights and representation, continues. Sweden contributes approximately 250 personnel to MINUSMA, has extensive development cooperation, supplies humanitarian aid and contributes

personnel and resources to EU's operations in Mali.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Government condemns terror attack in Tunisia

Published 26 June 2015 Updated 26 June 2015

“The reports from Tunisia shock and dismay me. The Swedish Government vigorously condemns the terror attack that took place today in the town of Sousse,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

“We condemn this outrage and want to express our strong solidarity with Tunisia and deep sympathy for those affected and their families,” Ms Wallström says.

“We are currently trying to find out exactly what has happened through the Swedish consulate in Sousse. At present we have no information about Swedish victims,” Ms Wallström says.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement on the peace agreement in Mali

Published 15 May 2015 Updated 25 May 2015

Sweden welcomes the signature today of a peace and reconciliation agreement between the Government of Mali and the Plateforme coalition of armed groups. We urge the parties that have not signed the agreement to do so as soon as possible, and welcome yesterday's initialling by the armed groups of the CMA coalition.

All parties must work together to implement the agreement now in place. Only a political solution can bring an end to the conflict and the suffering of the people of Mali. Women must play an active role in shaping the country's development.

Sweden supports the efforts for peace, security and development in Mali. We have contributed approximately 250 people to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to help bring stability and protect civilians. MINUSMA has also played an important role in the peace negotiations. We also remain a long-term partner of Mali through our development cooperation, which focuses on democratic governance and sustainable development of natural resources.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Margot Wallström on the release of two Swedes held hostage in Syria

Published 25 April 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

"I am very glad that two Swedes held hostage in Syria have now been released and can be reunited with their families. We have worked very closely and very well with other Swedish authorities, particularly with the police. I would also like to thank all the countries that have supported us in this case. Special thanks to Palestine, and to President Abbas personally, whose involvement has been crucial, and to the Jordanian authorities. For well-known reasons, I cannot comment on how we work in such cases in any more detail."

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs





Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Margot Wallström and Isabella Lövin on the earthquake in Nepal

Published 25 April 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Joint statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for International Development Cooperation Isabella Lövin on the earthquake in Nepal

"We feel deep sorrow about the thousands of people who have died, been injured or otherwise suffered from the powerful earthquake in Nepal and neighbouring countries.

Our thoughts and sympathies - and those of the entire Government - are with those who have lost loved ones, who are living in uncertainty about the fate of their families and friends, and whose homes have been destroyed.

The earthquake has caused great devastation and many people are still missing. Large-scale rescue operations and measures to assist the victims can be expected. Sweden will contribute through its core support to UN humanitarian bodies and is ready to respond to calls for additional assistance."



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström on the tragedy in 1915

Published 24 April 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Today we remember one of the very darkest chapters of our European history and show our respect for all of those who fell victim to the large-scale atrocities that took place against the Armenian people and other minorities in the crumbling Ottoman Empire during the First World War.

The accounts of what happened are horrendous. Both contemporary reports, such as those from the Swedish Embassy in Constantinople, and recent research testify to an unimaginably large number of people being murdered, deported or forced to flee from their homes. A considerable proportion of the Ottoman Empire's Christian population was lost.

It is crucial that painful historical events such as this are handled responsibly. The Government encourages an open analysis and digestion of important historical events so as to contribute to reconciliation and historical redress. We need a lively debate that is open to international research and free from censorship. The Government is now conducting a review of how to refer and relate to historical mass atrocities.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Morgan Johansson

# Joint statement on the shipwreck in the Mediterranean

Published 19 April 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

**By Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström and Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson.**

“We are dismayed by the shipwreck in the Mediterranean in which a large number of people drowned on their way to Europe.

The unscrupulous people-smugglers who exploit the situation of desperate people bear a large part of the responsibility. The reports of the tragedy are harrowing and heart-rending, and the EU must now take action and strengthen our joint measures to try to prevent a repeat of this tragedy. Sweden will work for further measures on the part of the EU to strengthen rescue operations at sea, combat refugee-smuggling and support peace processes in conflict-affected areas.

The European Commission and the European Council need to take initiatives to strengthen Operation Triton. If the EU is unable to take initiatives, individual countries should do so. Sweden stands ready to rapidly provide resources from the Swedish Coast Guard.

Libya is the transit country for the majority of those who attempt to enter the EU across the Mediterranean, and the ongoing collapse of Libya provides scope for this deadly people-smuggling. Migration and the situation in Libya will be the subject of considerable attention at the meeting of the EU foreign ministers on Monday. Sweden will push for the EU to do more, together with the UN and others, to support the peace process in Libya so that the situation stabilises and effective measures to stop people-smuggling can be implemented.

Many of those who risk their lives to reach Europe on dilapidated and overcrowded vessels are seeking refuge from war and persecution. Europe must

do more to ensure that people in need of protection can come to Europe legally. At present, half of EU Member States do not even take in UN quota refugees, and the reception of asylum seekers is extremely uneven among Member States. The EU and many Member States are working actively to contribute to political solutions to the conflicts and terror that force people to flee countries such as Iraq and Syria. But in a world in which so many people are forced to flee, Europe should be doing more, and one of the basic premises of the common asylum policy should be that all Member States take in quota refugees.”

Margot Wallström  
Morgan Johansson



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement on the agreement in Lausanne

Published 03 April 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

The Swedish Government warmly welcomes the great progress made in the negotiations with Iran.

The agreement in Lausanne between the EU3+3 and Iran on key parameters for an agreement on Iran's nuclear programme is a signal inspiring hope for a region grappling with great challenges. I call upon everyone to now give their full support to the continued negotiations so that a final agreement can be reached by 30 June.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement on the terrorist attack in eastern Kenya

Published 03 April 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

The Swedish Government condemns Thursday's appalling terrorist attack against Garissa University College in eastern Kenya.

Once again, Al Shabaab has committed an atrocity against innocent people, leaving at least 147 people dead and many others seriously injured.

I feel great sorrow and anger that all these young people have lost their lives, and I would like to express my own and the rest of the Government's deep sympathy with all those who have been injured or have lost a family member or friend.

Those who are responsible for this terrible deed must be brought to justice. International cooperation to prevent and combat terrorism must continue.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Margot Wallström on the terrorist attacks in Yemen

Published 21 March 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

I am shocked and distressed by yesterday's appalling terrorist attacks in Yemen. The attacks against two mosques in Sana'a killed at least 140 people and many more were seriously injured.

The Government condemns these cowardly acts of terrorism, which deliberately targeted civilians during Friday prayers. Our thoughts go to the victims' families and loved ones.

The spiral of violence must now be broken and all parties return to the negotiating table to find a political solution.

The UN's efforts have our full support. The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) also has a key role to play in finding a solution.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement on the situation in Syria and Iraq

Published 27 February 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

The situation in Syria and Iraq is exceptionally serious. We are seeing a humanitarian disaster with devastating consequences for an entire region and repercussions for the whole world. Both ISIL and the Assad regime in Syria are committing serious abuses on a daily basis.

The abduction of hundreds of Assyrians in Syria is yet another example of ISIL's sheer brutality. Sweden condemns these crimes, and we are deeply concerned at what has happened. Many Assyrians have come to Sweden and found refuge here. ISIL's actions in Syria and Iraq threaten a people with deep historical roots in the Middle East.

The brutality of ISIL strikes the civilian populations of Iraq and Syria indiscriminately. No one is safe: Sunnis, Shias, Kurds, Christians or other groups. Those who commit crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity and other serious breaches of international law must be held to account.

The Government is monitoring the situation closely and has chosen to focus support on two main approaches: humanitarian and political.

Since 2011, Sweden has contributed more than SEK 1.3 billion in humanitarian support to Syria alone. This sum includes support to the UN, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement and other international organisations with access to the area. Sweden has also taken in some 65 000 asylum seekers from Syria. We are supporting Syria's neighbouring countries, which are under immense pressure.

In the long term, only a political solution can put a stop to the conflict. The Government fully supports the work of UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura. He is working intensively, and the Government is in close contact with him so as to be able to support the work in the best possible way.



Sweden is working via the EU, and together with the Arab League, Turkey and other countries in the region to expedite a solution. Sweden also supports the US-led military operation against ISIL in northern Iraq. Sweden is planning a military contribution to the training operation that has been established in northern Iraq as part of the coalition efforts to defeat ISIL.

Sweden will continue its efforts and actions. The Government feels that in this work, it is important to maintain contacts with groups from the region in Sweden, including Yazidis, Assyrians, Kurds and others.



Statement from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement on the first anniversary of Yanukovych regime violence against protesters in Independence Square in Kyiv

Published 22 February 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

Today we remember and honour the people who lost their lives in the Yanukovych regime's violent crackdown on protesters in Independence Square in Kyiv. Over the last twelve months, in violation of all international law, Russia has annexed Crimea and via so-called 'separatists' subjected Ukraine to acts of aggression that have so far claimed the lives of more than 5 000 people. Almost 1.5 million people have been forced to flee from their homes. The responsibility for this lies unequivocally with Russia.

Sweden and the EU have supported the diplomatic efforts to uphold Ukraine's and territorial integrity and sovereignty and to bring an end to the conflict. The Minsk agreements have been important in creating a basis for a political solution to the conflict. However, the continuous breaches of the ceasefire negotiated in Minsk just over a week ago indicate that Russia and the separatists are still not ready to lay down their arms. By abiding by and pursuing the sanctions that have been adopted, the EU and the rest of the world must now show Russia that aggression in eastern Ukraine will come at an increasingly high price. By supporting Ukraine, we keep the hope of change alive. We also demonstrate that aggression and the use of armed force will never pay off or be accepted in our time.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Margot Wallström on Norway's intent to continue participating in the EU ETS

Published 05 February 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

I welcome Norway's announcement today that the country intends to join the EU 2030 framework for climate and energy policies and thus continue participating in the EU Emissions Trading System for the period after 2020. The Trading System is a key tool for achieving EU climate and energy targets for 2030. Norway's agreement to join further strengthens Europe's position ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference to be held in Paris at the end of the year.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Margot Wallström on the attack at Paris offices of satirical magazine

Published 07 January 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

The attack on the Paris offices of the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo is horrendous. The attack has left many dead. Our thoughts go to the victims and their families. It is also a deeply alarming attack on the fundamental freedom to spread information and express an opinion. This is essential for an open and democratic society. We must defend freedom of expression and freedom of the press in every way, and those responsible must be brought to justice. Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs



Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Ten years since the tsunami

Published 25 December 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

This Christmas, it is ten years since the tsunami of 26 December 2004. As the images from the disaster are replayed, our thoughts go out to those who lost their lives and their families and friends.

To commemorate the disaster, the Swedish Embassy in Thailand is organising a memorial ceremony in Khao Lak. A national memorial service held in Uppsala Cathedral will be broadcast on television, so that we can all remember and honour the memory of those who died. The Government will be represented at both ceremonies.

More than 250 000 people lost their lives in the tsunami, 543 of them Swedes. Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand suffered most from the disaster. The Swedes who lived through this nightmare speak of the kindness and support shown to them by the local people in the countries affected. In the emergency, people helped one another. On behalf of Sweden, today we thank the people in the countries affected for their invaluable help and warmth during and after the tsunami. It is sometimes said that international solidarity knows no borders. Amidst the tragedy, we saw how reality lived up to these lofty words.

Today we also thank the volunteers who were willing to help at the height of the disaster, in extremely demanding conditions. Without their help, the situation of those affected would in many cases have been considerably worse.

The disaster caused widespread homelessness, destroyed people's livelihoods, devastated the infrastructure and tested health services and other public institutions to their limits. Sweden and many other countries have shared in the work of reconstruction. This has strengthened our relations and helped us to deal with trying situations together.

The tsunami also exposed obvious weaknesses in Sweden's ability to deal with major emergencies abroad affecting many Swedes. An inquiry was later conducted which looked at the actions of the Swedish state and its crisis management. Many of the proposals presented have now taken shape in the crisis management organisation that has been built up at the Government Offices, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sweden's missions abroad.

As a country, we must move on, but sometimes it is also necessary to pause and reflect. The Christmas season gives us an opportunity to do so. Our thoughts are with the families who continue to live with the pain.

Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström following the Nobel Peace Prize announcement

Published 10 October 2014 Updated 17 May 2015

I would like to offer my congratulations to Kailash Satyarthi and Malala Yousafzai following the announcement today by the Norwegian Nobel Committee that they are both to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The greatest threat to the Taliban is a young girl with a book. In my eyes, Malala Yousafzai is a hero. I also think that it was wise of the Nobel Committee to have a clear child rights theme, and to share the prize between a young activist and a person who has devoted his life's work to children's rights.

I hope that the Prize serves as an inspiration to all those who fight daily for children, and particularly young girls.