

**INTERNATIONAL SECURITY UPDATE**  
**July 16 - 23, 2014**

1. [Kerry Pushes for Gaza Truce as Fighting Continues](#) (07-23-2014)
2. [Ambassador Power at U.N. Debate on Middle East](#) (07-22-2014)
3. [U.N., U.S. Denounce ISIL Persecution of Iraqi Minorities](#) (07-22-2014)
4. [Obama on Ukraine and Gaza](#) (07-21-2014)
5. [Ambassador Power on U.S. Vote for U.N. Resolution on Downed Airliner](#) (07-21-2014)
6. [Iran Nuclear Talks Will Continue, Diplomats Announce](#) (07-21-2014)
7. [Russia Must Act to Reduce Tensions in Ukraine, Kerry Says](#) (07-20-2014)
8. [United States Assessment of the Downing of Flight MH17 and its Aftermath](#) (07-19-2014)
9. [Russian Military Buildup near Ukraine Concerns DoD Officials](#) (07-16-2014)
10. [U.S. Sets New Ukraine-Related Sanctions on Entities, Individuals](#) (07-16-2014)

-----

**1. [Kerry Pushes for Gaza Truce as Fighting Continues](#) (07-23-2014)**

Washington — U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said officials working on a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas have “made some steps forward” toward ending a conflict that has left hundreds of people dead.

He spoke July 23 after arriving in Israel for talks on how to end more than two weeks of pitched violence. Kerry is meeting with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He will also hold talks with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah

Ban held talks with Israeli President Shimon Peres and said there is “no time to lose” in finding a cease-fire, with the death toll “rising by the hour.”

“As secretary-general of United Nations, I cannot and I will not be silent in the face of this tragedy,” Ban said. “I mourn the loss of so many innocent lives in Gaza, and I grieve with the families. The violence must stop now, as I said, dialogue must begin. That’s what I am now doing — to promote such a dialogue among the parties concerned.”

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay exerted more pressure on Israel, saying July 23 there was “a strong possibility” the country had committed war crimes in its assault on Gaza, Reuters reported. At least 645 Palestinians, mostly civilians, have died in the fighting.

U.S. officials have downplayed expectations for an immediate, lasting truce between Israel and the Hamas militant group that controls Gaza. At minimum, Kerry’s mission sought to define the limits of what each side would accept in a potential cease-fire.

Recognizing the depths of the mistrust fueling this violence, Kerry said a cease-fire alone is clearly not enough.

“It is imperative that there be a serious engagement, discussion, negotiation regarding the underlying issues and addressing all of the underlying concerns that have brought us to where we are today,” Kerry said.

On July 22, he said an earlier cease-fire plan put forward by Egypt could be the framework for a new agreement. Israel accepted that deal last week, but Hamas rejected it because it did not remove the Israeli and Egyptian blockade of Gaza.

A senior State Department official traveling with Kerry said, “There may be a degree to which” the border crossings can be addressed in a new cease-fire.

#### ISRAELI AIRSTRIKES CONTINUE

The Israeli military continued hitting the Gaza Strip with airstrikes July 23, killing at least three people. It also announced the deaths of two more soldiers, bringing the total number of Israeli deaths to 29 soldiers and two civilians.

The military said one of its soldiers is missing and presumed dead. Hamas said it captured him, but has not released his picture.

Clouds of black smoke hung over the densely populated Mediterranean enclave, with the regular thud of artillery and tank shells filling the air.

“We are meeting resistance around the tunnels. ... They are constantly trying to attack us around and in the tunnels. That is the trend,” said Israeli military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Peter Lerner.

He said 30 militant gunmen had been killed overnight, bringing the total to 210 since the offensive started July 8 to stop Hamas from firing rockets into Israel. The Jewish state had begun by waging airstrikes, adding ground troops as of July 17 to seek and destroy weapons caches and tunnels in Gaza.

Hamas’ armed wing, the Izz el-Deen Al-Qassam, said its fighters had detonated an anti-personnel bomb as an Israeli army patrol passed, killing several troops. There was no immediate confirmation from Israel.

Three Palestinians died in Israeli strikes on July 23, Gaza officials said. Rocket launches set off air-raid sirens in southern Israel, but there was no word of casualties.

There was also violence in the West Bank, where a Palestinian was shot dead by Israeli troops near Bethlehem. The army said soldiers fired a rubber bullet at him during a confrontation with dozens of Palestinians hurling rocks and Molotov cocktails.

## PLO SUPPORT

Earlier on July 23, the Palestinian decision-making body led by U.S.-backed President Mahmoud Abbas endorsed demands by Hamas for halting Gaza hostilities with Israel, a closing of ranks that may help Egyptian-mediated truce efforts.

With Israeli and U.S. encouragement, Egypt has tried to get both sides to hold fire and then negotiate terms for protracted calm in the Palestinian enclave.

Hamas, the Gaza Strip's dominant Islamists, and other armed factions had balked at Cairo's offer, saying they wanted assurances of relief from an Israeli-Egyptian blockade and other concessions.

The dispute was further complicated by distrust between Egypt under President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi and Hamas.

In a move that could effectively turn Abbas into the main interlocutor for a Gaza truce, his umbrella Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on July 23 formally supported core conditions set by the Hamas-led fighters.

"The Gaza demands of stopping the aggression and lifting the blockade in all its forms are the demands of the entire Palestinian people and they represent the goal that the Palestinian leadership has dedicated all its power to achieve," senior PLO official Yasser Abed Rabbo said in Ramallah, the hub city in the Israeli-occupied West Bank where Abbas is based.

"We are confident Gaza will not be broken as long as our people are standing beside it to support it through all possible means until the invaders understand that our great people inside the homeland and outside will not leave Gaza alone," Rabbo said.

## TRUCE NEGOTIATIONS

Signaling that Abbas, too, sought a staggered cessation of hostilities, the Palestinian leader's Fatah faction on July 22 proposed a truce followed by five days of negotiations.

There was no immediate response to the PLO statement from Hamas or from Israel, which launched its Gaza offensive July 8 after a surge of cross-border rocket salvos.

Egyptian sources, speaking on July 22 as Kerry visited Cairo to advance truce efforts, said a unified Palestinian position could help achieve a deal.

Unlike Hamas, which refuses permanent coexistence with the Jewish state, the PLO has pursued peacemaking for two decades.

Those efforts were set back in April when Netanyahu called off U.S.-sponsored peace negotiations over Abbas's surprise power-share deal with Hamas.

Yet Netanyahu stopped short of cutting ties with Abbas, whose forces help secure the West Bank, and foreign mediators continue to see the Palestinian leader as someone the Israelis can negotiate with.

Having unilaterally accepted an Egyptian-proposed truce last week that was rejected by Hamas, the Israelis made clear on July 22 they would not stand down before their forces destroyed Hamas's military infrastructure, including rocket sites and a network of tunnels used for cross-border Palestinian raids.

"A cease-fire is not near," said Justice Minister Tzipi Livni, the most dovish member of Netanyahu's security Cabinet.

## HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS

U.N. rights chief Navi Pillay reiterated her condemnation of indiscriminate rocket fire from Gaza as she spoke July 23 to the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva. She said it is unacceptable to launch attacks from populated areas, echoing a criticism from Israeli officials who say Hamas intentionally operates around civilians.

Pillay listed Israeli attacks that killed children on a beach in Gaza, as well as a deadly airstrike on a hospital, as examples where there is a "strong possibility" the military has violated international law in a way that could amount to war crimes.

She also urged Israel to end its blockade of Gaza, and said both Israelis and Palestinians "deserve better than a life of chronic insecurity and recurring escalation in hostilities."

## FLIGHT BAN STILL IN EFFECT

Meanwhile, U.S. airlines remained prohibited from flying into Israel's Ben Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv.

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration instituted a ban of up to 24 hours around midday Washington time after a rocket fired by Hamas militants in Gaza landed near the airport. European airlines quickly canceled their flights as well.

An Israeli official said Netanyahu asked Kerry to help restore the U.S. flights, saying its airspace was safe.

A U.S. official said the Obama administration would not "overrule the FAA" on a security precaution but noted the ban would be reviewed after 24 hours.

*Scott Stearns contributed to this report from Tel Aviv. Some information for this report provided by Reuters and AP.*

## Related Articles:

[Remarks With UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon Before Their Meeting](#)  
[Travel to Egypt, Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Tel Aviv, July 21-23, 2014](#)  
[Kerry Discusses Gaza with Arab League, Egyptian Officials](#)  
[Kerry, U.N. Secretary-General in Cairo](#)  
[State Dept. Facts on U.S. Assistance to Gaza](#)

---

## **2. Ambassador Power at U.N. Debate on Middle East (07-22-2014)**

*Remarks by Ambassador Samantha Power, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, at a Security Council Open Debate on the Middle East*

Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to thank Secretary-General Ban for his briefing and for his efforts to secure peace and protect civilians in the Middle East. My remarks today will address two areas: Israel and Gaza, and Syria.

First, in Gaza, the United States is working intensively to secure an immediate cessation of hostilities based on a return to the November 2012 cease-fire agreement between Israel and Hamas. This is the message President Obama gave in his public remarks yesterday. It is the purpose of Secretary of State Kerry's trip to Cairo, where he met with Egyptian leaders and the Secretary-General, and is conferring regularly with other allies and partners. And it is a goal that the President of the Security Council embraced on behalf all of the Council's members when we met this past Sunday. We also recognize that as we work toward the short-term goal of a ceasefire, we also have to solve the underlying issues that led to this conflict, and ultimately build a long-term peace through a two-state solution.

Throughout the hostilities, we have consistently recognized Israel's right to defend itself, whether through attacks by rockets overhead or tunnels below. No country in the world would tolerate a relentless barrage of attacks on its citizens. Yesterday, in a single day, militants fired 155 rockets into Israel. In the two weeks of fighting, more than 2,000 rockets have been launched on Israel. On Sunday, Israel foiled another attempt by armed militants to use tunnels to sneak into the country and launch an attack. And then again, yesterday militants from Gaza entered Israel and killed four Israeli soldiers.

In Gaza, the toll of the violence has been devastating. More than 600 Palestinians have been killed, the large majority civilians, including at least 59 women and more than 121 children. More than 3,700 more have been injured. Thousands of homes have been damaged, many totally destroyed. And more than 100,000 people have been displaced. As the destruction mounts, some 35,000 Palestinians who need food have not yet been reached. 1.2 million people have little or no access to water or sanitation. And behind every number is a real person, perhaps even a child. The suffering is immense.

Yet, even the most determined efforts to reach those in need have fallen short. The UN is near its capacity to take in those without shelter. Relief services are overwhelmed. In short, the situation is unsustainable. That is why a ceasefire as soon as possible is essential, as both Secretary Kerry and Secretary-General Ban have emphasized from Cairo.

When we convened on Sunday, the Council President expressed our shared concern about the growing number of casualties and underscored the need to protect civilians. Yet, the violence continues to rise, as does the number of people who suffer from it. Yesterday, Secretary Kerry announced the United States is providing \$47 million to help address the immediate humanitarian emergency in Gaza. These funds will provide critical humanitarian aid, including shelter, food, and medical supplies for Palestinians in Gaza. And we encourage all of our partners in the international community to respond to the humanitarian needs of the people in Gaza and the appeal issued by the United Nations.

All parties to the conflict must comply with international humanitarian law. That means respecting and protecting civilians and humanitarian and medical facilities. By the most recent tally, 77 UN structures had been damaged so far in the fighting. Militants in Gaza have repeatedly used civilian facilities for military purposes. Yesterday, a hospital in Gaza was struck by a tank shell, killing at least four people inside.

The humanitarian cease-fires brokered by the UN and the ICRC, on July 18th and July 20th, had potential to provide a reprieve from the violence and enable those in need of food, water and medicine to receive assistance. And yet, given a chance to help alleviate the suffering of Palestinian civilians, Hamas balked.

During both cease-fires, rockets and mortars were launched from Gaza at Israel. And Hamas has so far refused to agree to an Egyptian-brokered ceasefire, which could halt the fighting and ease the suffering of innocent people on both sides. The United States supports Egypt's initiative.

As grave as the situation is now – and it is indeed grave – it can get worse. If the fighting persists, it will. Humanitarian conditions will continue to deteriorate. More civilians will suffer. And more innocent lives will be lost. The only solution is an immediate ceasefire. This could not be more urgent or more important, given the devastating consequences of the violence for civilian populations. That is why the United States will not rest until a ceasefire is achieved and the underlying issues fueling the conflict are addressed.

On Syria. Last week, we adopted a resolution in an effort to address the humanitarian devastation and suffering of the Syrian people. UN humanitarian agencies will be delivering humanitarian assistance through four additional border crossings, and across conflict lines, without the approval of the Syrian regime. United Nations agencies have to be able to reach people in desperate need of assistance in all parts of the country, including those controlled by the opposition, as the Assad regime denies such basic assistance to further its military and political goals. We hope it will make a difference in the lives of several million Syrians who have been without food, medicine, and other forms of assistance for more than a year.

As this Council is well aware, the resolution was necessary because of the regime's cynical use of "starve or surrender" tactics and other deliberate strategies to deprive and punish people, particularly those living in contested and opposition-controlled areas.

The denial of basic humanitarian aid continues to be only one of the deadly weapons in the Assad regime's deadly arsenal. Among the others: chemical and conventional weapons, including air power, tanks, mines, and snipers.

We have seen the devastation inflicted when the regime unleashes this arsenal on innocent civilians, as it did in Homs. In recent weeks, we have once again watched in horror as the Assad regime exercises a stranglehold on the people of Aleppo. Roughly half a million Syrians remain in the city, which has been encircled and slowly asphyxiated by Assad's forces, which have obstructed the flow of basic humanitarian assistance such as food, water, and medicine. In addition, the regime has dropped roughly 15 to 20 barrel bombs a day on the city, and a similar number on the suburbs surrounding it.

As disturbing as the absolute number of bombs dropped is when and where they have been dropped. People in the Aleppo Provincial Council report that the regime has increasingly concentrated its bombings at the time of day when Muslims are breaking their daily fast, or Iftar. And they have chosen to target the places where people are most likely to congregate. This is obscene.

So, the Assad regime has taken Islam's holiest month and used it to calibrate its bombing runs. It has taken advantage of people's rituals of faith to maximize suffering. Even by the horrific bar this regime has set, the malevolence of this pattern is shocking. And Aleppo is not the only place Assad is using this tactic.

In Yarmouk, UNRWA was only recently allowed to resume distributing food and other aid to Palestinian refugees, after several months of being denied access by the regime. Anyone who has seen photos of the Yarmouk refugees knows that this population's survival hangs by a thread. We are monitoring the situation there, in Aleppo, and in other sites closely and we call on the regime to fully implement Resolution 2139 and to comply with its obligations under Resolutions 2139 and 2165, as well as its basic obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law.

This is a snapshot of two places in the home of the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. Yet, as the cases of Aleppo and Yarmouk demonstrate, these humanitarian problems stem from a political crisis, and the barbaric tactics of a regime that has lost the legitimacy to lead. Fixing that crisis will ultimately demand a political solution that Syrians can embrace.

To this end, we welcome newly-appointed Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura and Deputy Envoy Ramzy Ezzeldin Ramzy. They have agreed to take on the daunting task of providing good offices toward bringing an end to the violence and human rights violations that plague Syria, and promoting a peaceful solution to this long-standing crisis. They have our full support.

Thank you.

---

### **3. U.N., U.S. Denounce ISIL Persecution of Iraqi Minorities (07-22-2014)**

By Victor Beattie | VOA News

Washington —The United States and U.N. Security Council denounced the persecution of Iraqi minorities under the control of radical Sunni militants of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which seeks to create a caliphate across parts of Iraq and Syria. The condemnations followed the issuance of a decree by ISIL that Christians and other non-Muslims under its control must convert to Islam, pay a special tax, leave or face execution.

#### **DENOUNCING ISIL**

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf on July 21 denounced ISIL's declaration of July 19, which impacted Christians as well as Shi'ite Muslims, Yazidis (Kurds linked to Zoroastrianism) and Shabaks. Many have fled the northern Iraqi city of Mosul and surrounding towns.

"We condemn in the strongest terms the systematic persecution of ethnic and religious minorities by ISIL. We are particularly outraged by ISIL's recent announcement that Christians in Mosul must convert, pay a tax, leave or face execution in coming days. These are abominable acts," said Harf. "We are very clear that they only further demonstrate ISIL's mission to divide and destroy Iraq, and they have absolutely no place in the future of Iraq. We could not be clearer."

Late on July 21, the U.N. Security Council issued a unanimous declaration denouncing what it calls "the systematic persecution of individuals from minority populations" and those who refuse the

“extremist ideology” of ISIL and associated armed groups. The Council said such attacks “may constitute a crime against humanity, for which those responsible must be held accountable.”

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on July 21 also condemned ISIL for what it calls the “forced deportation” of Christians under the threat of execution, “thus further tearing apart the social fabric of the Iraqi people.” OIC Secretary-General Iyad Ameen Madani condemned what he called “the terrorist group” and said such atrocities contradict the principles of the OIC “that call for the entrenchment of a culture of tolerance and affinity among all nations and peoples.”

#### TENS OF THOUSANDS FLEE

Hundreds of Christian families left Mosul, where they once numbered in the tens of thousands and traced their presence back 1,400 years. The group Open Doors, which monitors the persecution of Christians, said that while some families chose to stay and pay the tax, those who fled were sometimes stopped at checkpoints by militants and had their money, jewelry, mobile phones and medicine confiscated.

According to Patriarch Louis Sako, a senior Christian cleric in Iraq, many Christians from Mosul are fleeing to the autonomous region of Kurdistan.

Greg Barton, of the Center for Islam and the Modern World at Australia’s Monash University, said those Christians who remain under ISIL control will be vulnerable. “We’ve seen creeping persecution of Christians across the Middle East by hardline bullies with governments not doing enough to stand up and face it, and now this has reached a peak in ISIL’s caliphate,” he stated.

Barton said, while the international condemnation will have no impact on ISIL, it may serve other purposes.

“It will help those voices in Baghdad calling for a new Iraqi government to take a more principled position and it should make it easier for Christians fleeing Mosul and other towns in the north to find sanctuary in Baghdad, but, unfortunately, the last decade has seen a lot of persecution in Baghdad, so one can imagine that a lot will flee the country, if they can,” he added.

Barton said it will be up to ISIL leadership to decide whether to chart a less radical course over the territory and people it now controls. He said that could help it consolidate support among more moderate Sunnis. Otherwise, he said, a harsher form of Sharia law could turn the populace against it.

---

#### **4. Obama on Ukraine and Gaza (07-21-2014)**

*Statement by the President on the situation in Ukraine and Gaza*

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, everybody. I want to make a brief statement about the tragedy in Ukraine. Before I do, though, I want to note that Secretary Kerry has departed for the Middle East. As I’ve said many times, Israel has a right to defend itself against rocket and tunnel attacks from Hamas. And as a result of its operations, Israel has already done significant damage to Hamas’s terrorist infrastructure in Gaza. I’ve also said, however, that we have serious concerns about the rising number of Palestinian civilian deaths and the loss of Israeli lives. And that is why it now has to be our focus and the focus of the international community to bring about a cease-fire that ends the fighting and that can stop the deaths of innocent civilians, both in Gaza and in Israel.

So Secretary Kerry will meet with allies and partners. I've instructed him to push for an immediate cessation of hostilities based on a return to the November 2012 cease-fire agreement between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. The work will not be easy. Obviously, there are enormous passions involved in this and some very difficult strategic issues involved. Nevertheless, I've asked John to do everything he can to help facilitate a cessation to hostilities. We don't want to see any more civilians getting killed.

With respect to Ukraine, it's now been four days since Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was shot down over territory controlled by Russian-backed separatists in Ukraine. Over the last several days, our hearts have been absolutely broken as we've learned more about the extraordinary and beautiful lives that were lost -- men, women and children and infants who were killed so suddenly and so senselessly.

Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with their families around the world who are going through just unimaginable grief. I've had the opportunity to speak to a number of leaders around the world whose citizens were lost on this flight, and all of them remain in a state of shock but, frankly, also in a state of outrage.

Our immediate focus is on recovering those who were lost, investigating exactly what happened, and putting forward the facts. We have to make sure that the truth is out and that accountability exists.

Now, international investigators are on the ground. They have been organized. I've sent teams; other countries have sent teams. They are prepared, they are organized to conduct what should be the kinds of protocols and scouring and collecting of evidence that should follow any international incident like this. And what they need right now is immediate and full access to the crash site. They need to be able to conduct a prompt and full and unimpeded as well as transparent investigation. And recovery personnel have to do the solemn and sacred work on recovering the remains of those who were lost.

Ukrainian President Poroshenko has declared a demilitarized zone around the crash site. As I said before, you have international teams already in place prepared to conduct the investigation and recover the remains of those who have been lost. But, unfortunately, the Russian-backed separatists who control the area continue to block the investigation. They have repeatedly prevented international investigators from gaining full access to the wreckage. As investigators approached, they fired their weapons into the air. These separatists are removing evidence from the crash site, all of which begs the question -- what exactly are they trying to hide?

Moreover, these Russian-backed separatists are removing bodies from the crash site, oftentimes without the care that we would normally expect from a tragedy like this. And this is an insult to those who have lost loved ones. This is the kind of behavior that has no place in the community of nations.

Now, Russia has extraordinary influence over these separatists. No one denies that. Russia has urged them on. Russia has trained them. We know that Russia has armed them with military equipment and weapons, including anti-aircraft weapons. Key separatist leaders are Russian citizens. So given its direct influence over the separatists, Russia and President Putin, in particular, has direct responsibility to compel them to cooperate with the investigation. That is the least that they can do.

July 23, 2014

President Putin says that he supports a full and fair investigation. And I appreciate those words, but they have to be supported by actions. The burden now is on Russia to insist that the separatists stop tampering with the evidence, grant investigators who are already on the ground immediate, full and unimpeded access to the crash site. The separatists and the Russian sponsors are responsible for the safety of the investigators doing their work. And along with our allies and partners, we will be working this issue at the United Nations today.

More broadly, as I've said throughout this crisis and the crisis in Ukraine generally, and I've said this directly to President Putin, as well as publicly, my preference continues to be finding a diplomatic resolution within Ukraine. I believe that can still happen. That is my preference today, and it will continue to be my preference.

But if Russia continues to violate Ukraine's sovereignty and to back these separatists, and these separatists become more and more dangerous and now are risks not simply to the people inside of Ukraine but the broader international community, then Russia will only further isolate itself from the international community, and the costs for Russia's behavior will only continue to increase.

Now is the time for President Putin and Russia to pivot away from the strategy that they've been taking and get serious about trying to resolve hostilities within Ukraine in a way that respects Ukraine's sovereignty and respects the right of the Ukrainian people to make their own decisions about their own lives.

And time is of the essence. Our friends and allies need to be able to recover those who were lost. That's the least we can do. That's the least that decency demands. Families deserve to be able to lay their loved ones to rest with dignity. The world deserves to know exactly what happened. And the people of Ukraine deserve to determine their own future.

Thanks.

Related Articles:

[Obama on Ukraine, Iran, Gaza, Afghanistan](#) (07-16-2014)

[Statement by the President on Ukraine](#) (07-18-2014)

[DoD Spokesman: No Hint Russia Has Ceased Rebel Support](#) (07-18-2014)

---

## **[5. Ambassador Power on U.S. Vote for U.N. Resolution on Downed Airliner \(07-21-2014\)](#)**

*Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Samantha Power, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, after a Vote on Security Council Resolution 2166 on the Downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 in Ukraine*

Today's resolution calls for a full, thorough and independent investigation into the horrific downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17. When 298 civilians are killed, we agree that we must stop at nothing to determine who is responsible and bring them to justice.

As we take this step, we are joined by the Dutch and Australian ministers, whose countries suffered an immense and heart-wrenching loss on Thursday – one they are still grappling with, together with nine other countries from where the victims came. We extend our deepest condolences to those countries, the families of victims they represent, and all of the people who lost loved ones on that plane. Your presence here today, along with the dozens of other countries whose representatives

will speak, gives even greater urgency to our calls for the dignified return of the victims and our pursuit of truth and justice.

As we reflect on the immeasurable loss suffered by these families around the world, we are not only outraged at the attack itself; we are horrified and enraged by what has happened since – by the clear intention of some to obstruct an investigation into how the passengers and crew died.

Even after adopting this resolution, it is worth asking: If there really is consensus that this crime merits an immediate and impartial investigation, why did we still feel the need to meet today in order to demand one?

We came together because not everyone has been supporting a real investigation into this crime. If they were, international experts would have had unimpeded access to the crime scene. And all of the wreckage would have been left where it had fallen.

That has not happened. Instead, armed thugs have walked around the site, with little regard for where they step. We have literally heard the sound of debris – all of it evidence that needs to be carefully preserved – crunching beneath their feet. We have seen separatists moving around human remains, and carting away evidence from the site.

All around the world this weekend, people of all cultures and faiths had similar reactions to seeing the footage of the separatists damaging the site: “Stop! Those are people. Those are people’s lives,” we all said. The passengers aboard Malaysian Airline Flight 17 had nothing to do with the conflict in eastern Ukraine: they were families heading on vacation, students returning home from abroad, researchers trying to eradicate a deadly disease. Those who were killed deserve to be treated with dignity, and their families are crying out – as we heard – for closure.

We condemn the actions of the separatists who control the site. Indeed, almost everyone has condemned this grotesque behavior.

But there is one party from which we have heard too little condemnation: and that is Russia.

Russia has been outspoken on other matters. Russian officials have publicly insinuated that Ukraine was behind the crash. On Friday, Russia blamed Ukrainian air traffic controllers for this attack rather than condemning the criminals who shot down the plane. Since then, Russia has begun to blame Ukraine for the attack itself, though the missile came from separatist territory that Russia knows full well Ukraine has not yet reclaimed.

But if Russia genuinely believed that Ukraine was involved in the shoot-down of Flight 17, surely President Putin would have told the separatists – many of whose leaders are from Russia – to guard the evidence at all costs, to maintain a forensically-pure, hermetically-sealed crime scene.

We welcome Russia’s support for today’s resolution. But no resolution would have been necessary had Russia used its leverage with the separatists on Thursday, getting them to lay down their arms and leave the site to international experts. Or on Friday. Or on Saturday. Or even yesterday.

It turns out that only this morning – coincidentally, the very morning this Security Council was meeting to discuss the investigation – did President Putin finally issue a public call to ensure the security of international experts. However – and this is critically important – President Putin still did not direct his call to the separatists who have threatened those experts, and over whom he has enormous influence.

President Poroshenko, by contrast, has consistently done everything within his power since the crash to allow capable investigators full and unfettered access to the crime scene. He has been willing to involve ICAO, the Netherlands, and other international players – hailing their independence.

Russia's muteness over the dark days between Thursday and today sent a message to the illegal armed groups it supports: We have your backs. This is the message Russia has sent by providing separatists with heavy weapons, by never publicly calling on them to lay down those weapons, and by massing thousands of troops at the Ukrainian border.

Today, we have taken a step toward combating impunity. The resolution passed provides clear directions to safeguard and uncover the facts—however inconvenient those facts may prove to be.

We have adopted a resolution today. But we are not naïve: if Russia is not part of the solution, it will continue to be part of the problem. For the past six months, Russia has seized Ukrainian territory and ignored the repeated requests of the international community to de-escalate – all in an effort to preserve influence in Ukraine, a country that has long made clear its desire to maintain constructive ties with Moscow.

Russia must recognize that no move on the geopolitical chessboard – no zero-sum game with the West – can offset the pain being felt by the passengers' families worldwide, or the pain that Ukrainians are experiencing daily as a result of this needless conflict.

As we meet, we are seeing initial signs of the separatists allowing greater access to the crash site. Today, three Dutch investigators have accessed the site. The separatists are attempting to hold this up as proof of their openness and good faith. But let's be clear, this is an extremely complex and time-sensitive crime scene. In that context, a spigot approach – letting in a few investigators here, a few more there – simply will not cut it. Access must be immediate and it must be full. Period. A spigot or stage-managed approach is a form of obstruction.

Russia can help change this. Russia can unequivocally condemn the separatists' inhumane treatment of the bodies at the site and use its influence to ensure they stop tampering with evidence. Russia can demand the separatists immediately adopt a ceasefire in the area around the crash site, as Ukraine has done. Russia can press the illegal groups to sit down with President Poroshenko, who has proposed a serious and reasonable peace plan. And instead of continuing to provide weapons to the separatists, Russia could take back all of the surface-to-air missiles, tanks, and other heavy weaponry that it has delivered to them.

These would not only be important steps toward achieving accountability and achieving justice for the victims. It would constitute a long overdue sign that Russia is willing to take steps to end this deadly crisis. Thank you.

Related Sites:

[Amb. Power at U.N. Security Council on Plane Downing in Ukraine](#)

---

## **6. Iran Nuclear Talks Will Continue, Diplomats Announce (07-21-2014)**

Washington — Iran and six world powers agreed to continue talks and to extend their deadline for reaching an agreement over Iran's nuclear program for another four months, diplomats who have been meeting for months in Vienna announced July 18.

“Diplomacy takes time, and persistence is needed to determine whether we can achieve our objectives peacefully,” Secretary of State John Kerry said in a July 18 statement. “To turn our back prematurely on diplomatic efforts when significant progress has been made would deny ourselves the ability to achieve our objectives peacefully, and to maintain the international unity that we have built.”

In a joint press statement announcing extension of the talks, High Representative of the European Union (EU) Catherine Ashton and Foreign Minister of Iran Mohammad Javad Zarif noted that Iran, the EU, China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States “have worked intensively towards a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, building on the political momentum created by the adoption and smooth implementation by both sides of the Joint Plan of Action agreed on 24 November 2013.”

The diplomats say the parties gave themselves until November 24 to reach a deal. An interim deal for Iran to curb its uranium enrichment in exchange for an easing of sanctions was set to expire July 20.

In announcing the decision to extend the talks, Ashton and Zarif said that although the parties “have made tangible progress on some of the issues and have worked together on a text for a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, there are still significant gaps on some core issues which will require more time and effort.”

During the extension period, all parties have committed to upholding obligations already made, Kerry said, including Iran's cap on the amount of 5 percent enriched uranium hexafluoride it can produce.

The United States “will continue to suspend the sanctions we agreed to under the JPOA and will allow Iran access to \$2.8 billion of its restricted assets, the four-month prorated amount of the original JPOA commitment. Let me be clear: Iran will not get any more money during these four months than it did during the last six months, and the vast majority of its frozen oil revenues will remain inaccessible.”

Iran has been negotiating since February to reach a long-term agreement on the future of its nuclear program, which Iran insists is aimed at developing civil nuclear power, not weapons. Whether Iran has the right to enrich uranium, a process that can produce fuel for nuclear reactors but also the core of a nuclear bomb, has been a key stumbling block in negotiations.

“One year ago, few would have predicted that Iran would have kept all its commitments under a first-step nuclear agreement, and that we would be actively negotiating a long-term comprehensive agreement,” Kerry said. “Now we have four additional months to determine the next miles of this difficult diplomatic journey. Let's all commit to seize this moment, and to use the additional time to make the fundamental choices necessary to conclude a comprehensive agreement that makes the entire world a safer place.”

Related Sites:

[Kerry on Extension of Iran Nuclear Talks](#)

[EU, Iran Joint Press Statement on Extension of Iran Talks](#)

## **7. Russia Must Act to Reduce Tensions in Ukraine, Kerry Says (07-20-2014)**

Washington — Russia's actions contributed to the circumstances that caused the crash of a plane carrying nearly 300 people in Ukraine and it must take responsibility, Secretary of State John Kerry says.

"There are an enormous array of facts that point at Russia's support for and involvement" in the shoot-down of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, Kerry told George Stephanopoulos of ABC's This Week, adding that "it's really a moment of truth for Russia to step up and be part of the solution."

In a series of appearances on national news programs July 20, the secretary outlined the facts currently known about the downing of a passenger flight in eastern Ukraine and reiterated the Obama administration's call for a free and unfettered investigation of the crash site.

- On ABC's This Week: The United States "tracked the imagery of the launch of this surface-to-air missile, of the disappearance of the aircraft from the radar at that time. We know that this comports with an SA-11 system because it hit an aircraft at the altitude of 33,000 feet. We know to a fact that the separatists bragged on the social media immediately afterwards about the shoot-down ... ."
- On CNN's State of the Union: "It's pretty clear that this is a system that was transferred from Russia in the hands of separatists. We know with confidence – with confidence – that the Ukrainians did not have such a system anywhere near the vicinity at that point in time."
- On CBS's Face the Nation: "We only had 75 minutes of access to the site on Friday, three hours of access yesterday, despite Mr. Putin and Russia saying they were going to make every effort to make sure there would be a full and fair investigation, thorough, and the site would be protected."
- On NBC's Meet the Press: "What's happening is really grotesque and it is contrary to everything that President Putin and Russia said that they would do. There are reports of drunken separatist soldiers unceremoniously piling bodies into trucks, removing both bodies as well as evidence from the site."
- On Fox's Fox News Sunday: "Some of the leaders of the separatists are Russian. Russia arms these separatists. Russia trains these separatists. Russia supports these separatists. Russia has spoken out and has refused to call on them publicly to do the things that need to be done. So I think this is a fundamental moment of truth for Russia, for Mr. Putin. They need to exert all of the influence that they have in order to protect the full integrity of this investigation."

The secretary echoed statements by President Obama and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power that Russia can and must do more to ensure investigators have full access to the debris field of the crash, and, more broadly, to stop the violence in eastern Ukraine.

### **KERRY'S CONVERSATION WITH RUSSIAN COUNTERPART**

During a July 19 telephone call with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Kerry urged Russia to take immediate and clear actions to reduce tensions in Ukraine, according to the State Department.

Specially, Kerry urged Russia to call on pro-Russia separatists in eastern Ukraine to lay down arms, release all hostages and engage in a political dialogue toward peace with the Ukrainian government. He also asked Russia to halt the flow of weapons and fighters into eastern Ukraine and to allow observers from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to help secure the border.

The State Department said the secretary particularly stressed the international call for investigators to receive full, immediate, and unfettered access to the Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 crash site, and underscored that the United States remains deeply concerned that, for the second day in a row, OSCE monitors and international investigators were denied proper access to the crash site.

The United States is also very concerned about reports that the remains of some victims and debris from the site are being tampered with or inappropriately removed from the site.

Kerry and Lavrov also briefly discussed the situation on the ground in Gaza and agreed to stay in touch in the coming days.

---

## **8. United States Assessment of the Downing of Flight MH17 and its Aftermath (07-19-2014)**

We assess that Flight MH17 was likely downed by a SA-11 surface-to-air missile from separatist-controlled territory in eastern Ukraine. We base this judgment on several factors.

Over the past month, we have detected an increasing amount of heavy weaponry to separatist fighters crossing the border from Russia into Ukraine. Last weekend, Russia sent a convoy of military equipment with up to 150 vehicles including tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery, and multiple rocket launchers to the separatist. We also have information indicating that Russia is providing training to separatist fighters at a facility in southwest Russia, and this effort included training on air defense systems.

Pro-Russian separatist fighters have demonstrated proficiency with surface-to-air missile systems and have downed more than a dozen aircraft over the past few months, including two large transport aircraft.

At the time that flight MH17 dropped out of contact, we detected a surface-to-air missile (SAM) launch from a separatist-controlled area in southeastern Ukraine. We believe this missile was an SA-11.

Intercepts of separatist communications posted on YouTube by the Ukrainian government indicate the separatists were in possession of a SA-11 system as early as Monday July 14th. In the intercepts, the separatists made repeated references to having and repositioning Buk (SA-11) systems.

Social media postings on Thursday show an SA-11 system traveling through the separatist-controlled towns of Torez and Snizhne, near the crash site and assessed location of the SAM launch. From this location, the SA-11 has the range and altitude capability to have shot down flight MH17.

Ukraine also operates SA-11 systems, but we are confident no Ukrainian air defense systems were within range of the crash. Ukrainian forces have also not fired a single surface-to-air missile during

the conflict, despite often complaining about violations of their airspace by Russian military aircraft.

Shortly after the crash, separatists – including the self-proclaimed “Defense Minister” of the Donetsk People’s Republic Igor Strelkov – claimed responsibility for shooting down a military transport plane on social media.

In an intercepted conversation that has been widely posted on the internet, a known-separatist leader tells another person that a separatist faction downed the aircraft. After it became evident that the plane was a civilian airliner, separatists deleted social media posts boasting about shooting down a plane and possessing a Buk (SA-11) SAM system.

Audio data provided to the press by the Ukrainian security service was evaluated by Intelligence Community analysts who confirmed these were authentic conversations between known separatist leaders, based on comparing the Ukraine-released internet audio to recordings of known separatists.

Video posted on social media yesterday show an SA-11 on a transporter traveling through the Krasnodon area back to Russia. The video indicated the system was missing at least one missile, suggesting it had conducted a launch.

Events on the ground at the crash site clearly demonstrate that separatists are in full control of the area.

Related Articles:

[U.S. Envoy at OSCE on Malaysia Airlines Flight 17](#)

---

## **9. Russian Military Buildup Near Ukraine Concerns DoD Officials (07-16-2014)**

By Jim Garamone

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, July 16, 2014 – U.S. defense officials are concerned about a buildup of Russian troops along that country’s border with Ukraine, Pentagon spokesman Army Col. Steve Warren said today.

“We believe there are now between 10,000 and 12,000 Russian troops on the border,” Warren told reporters. “We also have reason to believe that the Russians are continuing to support the separatist movement in Ukraine.”

The size of the Russian presence in the region means it’s capable of conducting operations on either side of the border, he added. “I can’t speak for what they intend to do. Certainly, it is intimidating.”

A few weeks ago, about 1,000 Russian soldiers were along the border. Earlier this year, tens of thousands of Russian troops were deployed in the area, Warren said.

The United States wants the Russians to stop what it terms provocative behavior and “execute actions that are in line with their words,” Warren said. Russian officials have said they want peace and stability in Ukraine and de-escalation of the situation there, but their actions work counter to those goals, he noted.

U.S. officials believe that some weaponry -- “possibly some heavy weapons” are flowing into Ukraine for use by separatists, Warren said. The troops moving to the area are battalion task groups and are combat soldiers.

U.S. and Ukrainian military officials met in June. “Another team is due to head out in the next few weeks to scope out specific defense institution building activities and programs that we may want to pursue,” he added.

The United States has sent body armor, uniforms and foodstuffs to Ukraine, and more aid is on the way. In addition, night-vision and thermal-imaging equipment and medical supplies are expected to arrive in Ukraine soon, Warren said.

Related Articles:

[DoD Official Expresses Concern Over Russian Intentions](#)

---

## **10. U.S. Sets New Ukraine-Related Sanctions on Entities, Individuals (07-16-2014)**

Washington — In response to Russia’s continued attempts to destabilize eastern Ukraine and its ongoing occupation of Crimea, the U.S. Department of the Treasury July 16 imposed a package of sanctions on entities in the financial services, energy and arms or related materiel sectors of Russia, and on those undermining Ukraine’s sovereignty or misappropriating Ukrainian property.

More specifically, the Treasury Department did the following:

- Imposed sanctions that prohibit U.S. persons from providing new financing to two major Russian financial institutions (Gazprombank OAO and VEB) and two Russian energy firms (OAO Novatek and Rosneft), limiting their access to U.S. capital markets.
- Designated eight Russian arms firms, which are responsible for the production of a range of materiel that includes small arms, mortar shells and tanks.
- Designated the “Luhansk People’s Republic” and the “Donetsk People’s Republic,” which have asserted governmental authority over parts of Ukraine without the authorization of the government of Ukraine; and Aleksandr Borodai, the self-declared “prime minister” of the Donetsk People’s Republic, for threatening the peace, security, stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.
- Designated Feodosiya Enterprises, a key shipping facility in the Crimean Peninsula, because it is complicit in the misappropriation of state assets of Ukraine.
- Designated four Russian government officials.

These actions do more than build upon previous steps to impose costs on separatists and the Russian government, the department said. By imposing sanctions on entities within the financial services and energy sectors, Treasury has increased the cost of economic isolation for key Russian firms that value their access to medium- and long-term U.S. sources of financing. By designating firms in the arms or related materiel sector, Treasury has cut these firms off from the U.S. financial system and the U.S. economy.

“Russia has continued to destabilize Ukraine and provide support for the separatists, despite its statements to the contrary,” said Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David S. Cohen.

Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew determined that persons operating within Russia’s financial services sector may now be subject to targeted sanctions. Following Lew’s determination, Treasury imposed measures prohibiting U.S. persons and persons within the United States from transacting in, providing financing for or otherwise dealing in new debt of longer than 90 days maturity or new equity for Gazprombank OAO and VEB, their property or their interests in property. As a practical matter, this step will close the medium- and long-term U.S. dollar lending window to these banks and will impose additional significant costs on the Russian government for its continued activities in Ukraine, Treasury said.

Treasury did not block the property or interests in property of these banks, nor did it prohibit transactions with them beyond these specific restrictions. However, the scope of the prohibited transaction types and the number of financial institutions may be expanded under Executive Order 13662, the department added.

Gazprombank OAO is a Russian financial institution that was originally established to provide financial services to companies in Russia’s energy industry but has expanded to provide services to more than 45,000 companies and 3 million private individuals.

VEB is a Russian state-owned financial institution that acts as a development bank and payment agent for the Russian government.

## ENERGY SECTOR

Secretary Lew determined that persons operating within Russia’s energy sector may now be subject to targeted sanctions. Following the determination, Treasury imposed measures that prohibit U.S. persons and persons within the United States from transacting in, providing financing for or otherwise dealing in new debt of longer than 90 days maturity for Russian energy firms OAO Novatek and Rosneft, their property or their interests in property.

OAO Novatek is Russia’s largest independent natural gas producer.

Rosneft is Russia’s largest petroleum company and third-largest gas producer. Treasury designated Rosneft President and Chairman of the Board Igor Sechin on April 28, 2014.

Treasury also designated and blocked the assets of Almaz-Antey, Federal State Unitary Enterprise State Research and Production Enterprise Bazalt, JSC Concern Sozvezdie, JSC MIC NPO Mashinostroyenia, Kalashnikov Concern, KBP Instrument Design Bureau, Radio-Electronic Technologies and Uralvagonzavod pursuant to Executive Order 13661 for operating in the arms or related materiel sector in the Russian Federation. The designated firms are responsible for the production of a range of materiel, from small arms to mortar shells to tanks. As a result of the July 16 action under Executive Order 13661, any assets of the entities designated that are within U.S. jurisdiction must be frozen. In addition, transactions by U.S. persons or within the United States involving the entities designated under Executive Order 13661 are generally prohibited.

## SANCTIONS ON INDIVIDUALS, ENTITIES

The following two entities and one individual are being designated and blocked pursuant to Executive Order 13660 for threatening the peace, security, stability, sovereignty or territorial integrity of Ukraine.

The Treasury Department has determined that the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) has asserted governmental authority over a part or region of Ukraine without the authorization of the government of Ukraine. The self-proclaimed LPR has asserted governmental authority through a number of actions, including issuing a declaration of martial law; banning the sale of corporate rights, production facilities, companies and other assets; controlling the border guard checkpoints of Izvarino, Dolzhanskoye and Krasnyi Partizansk on the Ukrainian-Russian border; and shooting down a Ukrainian military transport jet as it attempted to land in Luhansk. The LPR also elected a leader and passed its own constitution on May 11, 2014.

The Treasury Department has also determined the Donetsk People's Republic to have asserted governmental authority over a part or region of Ukraine without the authorization of the government of Ukraine. "The militia in the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic is defying the peaceful settlement regime, continues combat operations, and has seized and occupies regional government buildings, using them as its headquarters and firing positions," Treasury said. Igor Strelkov, the leader of the militia of the Donetsk People's Republic, rejected Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko's peace plan.

Aleksandr Borodai is the self-declared "prime minister" of the "Donetsk People's Republic" in Ukraine and has vowed to expel Ukraine's army from his new domain and resist any bid to recapture the city. Borodai was in Crimea as an adviser to Sergei Aksyonov, the separatist prime minister who oversaw the territory's purported annexation by Russia. Treasury designated Aksyonov on March 17, 2014.

Feodosiya Enterprise, designated July 16, operates a key shipping facility in the Crimean Peninsula for oil imports and exports. Prior to Russia's purported annexation of Crimea, Feodosiya Enterprise had been controlled by the Ukrainian state-controlled gas company Naftogaz. On March 25, 2014, the separatist self-styled "Crimean Parliament" nationalized Feodosiya Enterprise and decreed that the self-styled "Crimean Ministry of Fuel and Energy" would be the governing body of Feodosiya Enterprise. The separatist "minister of fuel and energy" asserting authority in occupied Crimea has confirmed that, as of April 15, 2014, separatist authorities in Crimea were provided with fuel by Russian oil companies using the storage facility operated by Feodosiya Enterprise.

#### SANCTIONS ON FOUR INDIVIDUALS

The following four individuals are being designated July 16 for their status as Russian government officials:

- Sergey Besesda heads Russia's Federal Security Service Fifth Service, also known as the Service for Operational Information and International Communications.
- Oleg Savelyev is Russia's minister for Crimean affairs. In this capacity, Savelyev is responsible for the integration of occupied Crimea into the Russian Federation following Russia's purported annexation of Crimea from Ukraine.
- Sergei Neverov is the deputy chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation. Neverov is responsible for initiating legislation to integrate the purportedly annexed Ukrainian region of Crimea into the Russian Federation.
- Igor Shchegolev is an aide to the president of the Russian Federation.

*July 23, 2014*

As a result of the July 16 actions under Executive Orders 13660 and 13661, any assets of the entities or individuals designated that are within U.S. jurisdiction must be frozen. Additionally, transactions by U.S. persons or within the United States involving the entities or individuals designated under the orders are generally prohibited.

More information on the the individuals and entities designated July 16 is available on the Treasury Department website.

---