



**STOP ARMS SALES TO SAUDI ARABIA**

**UK Arms sales to Saudi Arabia are killing civilians in Yemen**

Since March 2015, there have been an estimated 16,200 civilian deaths due to war. Over 3 million people have been displaced. 22.2 million people are in need of assistance. Over 2,380 people have died from cholera, and over 1 million have contracted it, a direct consequence of the conflict.

Since March 2015, Saudi Arabia has led a military coalition which aims to restore the former government. UK military advisers provide technical advice to Saudi command and control headquarters, and the UK trains the Saudi Air Force. And the UK is one of the biggest suppliers of arms to the Saudis, fuelling the conflict.

**Since 2015, the UK has licensed more than £4.6 billion of weapons sales to Saudi Arabia – a rise of 500% since the start of the war.**

The Foreign Office wrote to Women in Black in November 2017, *“The key test for our continued arms exports to Saudi Arabia in relation to IHL [International Humanitarian Law] is whether there is a clear risk that those weapons, the subject of the export licence, might be used in a serious violation of IHL.”* They have failed this test: a third of Saudi attacks have hit civilian targets, including hospitals and schools, as documented by Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF), Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Britain has consistently said that it keeps all arms exports under close scrutiny and that licensing is made on a case-by-case basis. But now a freedom of information request reveals that for the last five years, Britain has been selling Storm Shadow and Brimstone air-to-surface missiles and Paveway IV bombs to the Saudis under what are known as Open Individual Export Licences (OIELs), which the government says are for the export of “less sensitive goods”. Unlike specific licences, OIELs allow an unlimited number of consignments over a fixed period, typically between three and five years. There is no obligation to publish the total value of the licence after it expires. “Open licences remove the need for the seller to obtain prior approval for each export,” said Andrew Smith of Campaign Against Arms Trade, which submitted the FOI. “It’s an opaque system which has been used to shift extremely sensitive weaponry to the Saudi regime.”

**Arms sales to Saudi Arabia must cease. Support Campaign against the Arms Trade (CAAT)**

In May 2018 the Court of Appeal granted CAAT permission to appeal the legality of UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia. The appeal will take place later this year. Please sign CAAT’s petition <https://www.caat.org.uk/get-involved/act-now/petition/stop-arming-saudi>; see [www.caat.org](http://www.caat.org) for details; or follow @CAATuk on Twitter

**Women in Black stress: Conflict, fuelled by arms sales, undermines women’s rights. Women need secure homes, livelihoods, food security, education and healthcare, and protection from sexual and domestic violence. UK weapons sales increase insecurity for women in Yemen.**

*Please sign and send to:*

**The Rt.Hon. Theresa May, Prime Minister, 10 Downing Street, London SW1.**

The UK, as a party to the Arms Trade Treaty, is prohibited from authorizing an arms transfer if they have knowledge that the arms would be used to commit attacks against civilians or civilian objects; or violate international humanitarian law in any other way.

On these grounds I call on you to suspend all transfers of weapons to Saudi Arabia, including general purpose bombs, fighter jets, combat helicopters and their associated parts and components.

Signed.....Date.....

Name: .....

Address: .....

Women in Black hold vigils every Wednesday between 6-7 pm at the Edith Cavell Statue, opposite the door of the National Portrait Gallery, St.Martin’s Place, London, WC2. Our vigils are silent, women-only and if possible we wear black. See our website at [www.london.womeninblack.org](http://www.london.womeninblack.org) Contact us at: [wibinfo@gn.apc.org](mailto:wibinfo@gn.apc.org) [www.facebook.com/womeninblack.london](http://www.facebook.com/womeninblack.london) Twitter: @WIB\_London **Please join us.**