



Stop Arms Sales to Saudis NOW

Supreme Court rules UK Arms sales to Saudi Arabia unlawful

On 20 June, in an appeal brought by the Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT), the Supreme Court ordered the UK government not to grant any new licences for arms sales to Saudi Arabia for possible use in Yemen until decisions were made on the correct legal basis.

In their historic and legally important judgement the Supreme Court decided that the UK's decision-making process in approving arms exports was unlawful. The court found that the government had failed to assess, in making their decisions, whether Saudi Arabia had already committed violations of international humanitarian law (the laws of war) or considered the real risk of further violations.

Evidence in CAAT's case against the government was provided by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, whose research in Yemen showed how arms and equipment similar to those sold by the UK had been repeatedly been used to commit potential war crimes. Despite the government's claim that training by British military advisors had ensured the Saudi Air Forces' greater compliance with international law by the Saudi Air Force, court documents revealed that indiscriminate airstrikes and shelling of civilian targets, including a Medecins sans Frontières hospital, a village market and a wedding, occurred after such training.

Since March 2015, Saudi Arabia has led a military coalition against Iran-backed Houthis, aiming to restore Yemen's former government. Since then, the UK has licensed £4.7bn worth of arms sales to Saudi Arabia, including aircraft, drones and bombs. More than 18,400 civilians have been killed with 2,300 reported deaths from direct civilian targeting. Thousands of people have died from the cholera epidemic and over 2.3 million people have been displaced.

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Liam Fox, the International Trade Secretary, has already stated that the government will challenge the Court's ruling, which prevents any new export licences to sell arms to Saudi Arabia being granted, the decision does not prevent exports continuing under existing licences and contracts.

CAAT is calling on the government to implement the court's decision, and ensure these sales are stopped forever. You can help by sending an email to your MP – see <https://www.caat.org.uk/get-involved/act-now/unlawful> – asking them to put pressure on the government to implement the court's decision.

Armed conflict, fuelled by arms sales, undermines women's rights in Yemen. Education, health, water and sanitation services have been destroyed. The economic crisis, food and fuel shortages have created famine: over a million pregnant women and new mothers are acutely malnourished. Levels of both domestic violence and sexual violence have risen.

UK weapons sales increase insecurity for women in Yemen.

Please sign and send to:

The Prime Minister, 10 Downing Street, London SW1; and the Secretary of State for International Trade.

I call on the government to implement the judgement of the Supreme Court, by ensuring that no further arms transfers to Saudi Arabia are authorised, having considered the evidence that such arms would be used to commit attacks against civilians or civilian objects, or other violations of international humanitarian law.

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 Contact us at: wibinfo@gn.apc.org www.facebook.com/womeninblack.london Twitter: @WIB_London **Please join us. June 2019**