



Women in Black
London

**Stop Arms Sales
to Saudis NOW**

Court of Appeal ruled UK Arms sales to Saudi Arabia unlawful

In June 2019 the Court of Appeal ordered the UK government not to grant any new licences for arms sales to Saudi Arabia (and its coalition allies) for possible use in Yemen until such decisions were made on the correct legal basis. However, Secretary of State for International Trade, Liz Truss admitted to Parliament in September that the UK had breached this court order.

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

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 £5.3bn worth of arms sales to Saudi Arabia, including aircraft, drones and bombs. More than 104,000 people have been killed by conflict, with 12,000 deaths reported from direct civilian targeting. Thousands of people have died from the cholera epidemic and over 3.3 million people have been displaced. The UNDP estimated in April 2019 that 131,000 people would have died by the end of 2019 through indirect causes.

The legal case against the government was brought by the Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT); evidence was provided by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. Their research in Yemen showed how arms and equipment similar to those sold by the UK had repeatedly been used to commit potential war crimes. Despite the UK government's claim that training by British military advisors had ensured the Saudi Air Force's greater compliance with international law, court documents revealed that indiscriminate airstrikes and shelling had occurred after such training. Civilian targets included a Médecins Sans Frontières hospital, a village market and a wedding.

Continue supporting Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT)

The Government is challenging the Court's ruling that prevents the granting of any new export licences to sell arms to Saudi Arabia. The Court's decision does not prevent exports continuing under existing licences.

CAAT is calling on the government to implement the Court's ruling, end all arms exports to the Saudi Arabian regime and cease all support for the war in Yemen. You can help by sending an email to your MP – see <https://www.caat.org.uk/export-controls> – asking them for proper scrutiny of UK arms exports.

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.

I call on the government to ensure 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.** Feb 2020