



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP-0117, 6 June 2016

Human rights and the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia

Westminster Hall

**Wednesday 8 June 2016 – 9:30am to
11:00am**

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. Overview

Saudi Arabia's human rights record has often been subject to heavy criticism by governments and human rights groups.

Amnesty International's 2015/16 report provides the following [overview](#) of Saudi Arabia's human rights performance in 2014:

The government continued to severely restrict freedoms of expression, association and assembly. The authorities arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned human rights defenders and government critics, including under the 2014 anti-terror law, often after unfair trials. Some of those detained were prisoners of conscience. Torture and other ill-treatment of detainees remained common. Unfair trials continued before the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC), a special court for hearing terrorism-related cases, with some trials resulting in death sentences. Discrimination against the Shi'a minority remained entrenched; some Shi'a activists were on death row awaiting execution. Women faced discrimination in law and in practice and were inadequately protected against sexual and other violence. Thousands of migrants were summarily expelled, many to countries where they were at risk of serious human rights violations. The authorities used the death penalty extensively and carried out more than 150 executions.

Amnesty International recently reiterated its concern about the use of the death penalty in Saudi Arabia, [claiming](#) that more than nearly 100 executions have been carried out during the first five months of 2016.

The UK Government has been accused of muting its criticisms on human rights because of the country's importance as an ally and trading partner. Nonetheless, Saudi Arabia remains a human rights 'priority country' for the UK Government. Its latest update (published 21 April 2016), part of the [2015 Human Rights and Democracy](#) report, can be accessed [here](#).

Recently, there have been allegations that UK-supplied armaments have been used by the Saudi armed forces in the context of their military operation in Yemen to commit violations of international humanitarian law and that UK personnel are close to the Saudi-led coalition's targeting decisions. The UK Government says that it has faith in the UK's export licensing regime to prevent that from happening, and that UK advisers are not part of the coalition but do sometimes advise on how to comply with international humanitarian law.

For further information about this, see the Library briefing [Yemen at war](#) (published 26 May 2016).

2. Press articles

Saudi Arabia criticizes U.N. over Yemen blacklisting

Reuters
6 June 2016

Canada would face multi-billion dollar penalty if it cancelled armoured vehicle sale to Saudis

Toronto Star
Tonda MacCharles
4 June 2016

U.N. Adds Saudi Coalition To Blacklist For Killing Children In Yemen

Huffington Post
Michelle Nichols
3 June 2016

It's Time to Recalibrate Our Foreign Policy

Huffington Post UK
Tom Brake MP
1 June 2016

Saudi Arabia on course to execute more than 100 people in first six months of 2016 as use of death penalty rises

The Independent
Lizzie Dearden
1 June 2016

Exclusive: UK's £4.6bn arms trade with death penalty countries

iNews
Chris Green
1 June 2016

UK weapons sales to oppressive regimes top £3bn a year

The Observer
Jamie Doward
29 May 2016

Human rights groups say Saudi Arabia misused U.S.-made cluster bombs

Los Angeles Times
W.J. Hennigan
23 May 2016

As Canada faces heat over Saudi deal, Sweden looks to restrict arms exports

The Globe and Mail (Canada)
Steven Chase
21 May 2016

British arms sales to Saudi Arabia are immoral and illegal

The Guardian
Diane Abbott MP
25 March 2016

Rights groups urge end to Saudi arms sales over Yemen deaths

Daily Mail
AFP
22 March 2016

Saudi Arabia Uncovered: Documentary shows brutality of world where women are beheaded in street

International Business Times
Paul Wright
21 March 2016

UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia face inquiry and high court legal action

The Guardian
Patrick Wintour and Alice Ross
11 March 2016

Saudi Arabia's use of British weapons in Yemen to be investigated by Parliamentary commission

The Independent
Cahal Milmo
10 March 2016

EU parliament votes for embargo on arms sales to Saudi Arabia

The Guardian
Jennifer Rankin
25 February 2016

UK sold £1bn of arms to Saudi Arabia despite human rights violations in Yemen

RT
20 January 2016

US arms sale to Saudi Arabia criticised by human rights groups

The Independent
Alexandra Sims
10 December 2015

3. Press releases

Letter to Michael Fallon over Government's 'wildly implausible claims' on UK cluster munitions in Yemen

Amnesty International UK
6 June 2016

US: Stop Providing Cluster Munitions

Human Rights Watch
2 June 2016

Foreign Secretary in the Gulf to Discuss Countering Daesh and the Yemen Crisis

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
29 May 2016

Saudi Arabia-led coalition has used UK-manufactured cluster bombs in Yemen - new evidence

Amnesty International UK
23 May 2016

Yemen: US Bombs Used in Deadliest Market Strike

Human Rights Watch
7 April 2016

Yemen conflict: The UK must stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia

Amnesty International UK
29 March 2016

Yemen: Embargo Arms to Saudi Arabia

Human Rights Watch
21 March 2016

PM calls with King of Saudi Arabia, Angela Merkel and Norwegian PM: 27 January 2016

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
27 January 2016

Foreign Office Minister Ellwood on escalated tensions in Middle East

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
3 January 2016

PM holds talks with the King of Saudi Arabia at G20 Summit

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
16 November 2015

The Government of Saudi Arabia - Air-to-Ground Munitions

US Defense Security Cooperation Agency
16 November 2015

Political solution "the best way" for peace in Yemen says UK Special Envoy

Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 22 September 2015

4. PQs

Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia **26 May 2016 | 38075**

Asked by: Stephen Doughty

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, if he will suspend the sale of arms to countries of the Saudi Arabian-led military coalition following the coalition's alleged use of cluster munitions in the Yemen conflict.

Answered by: Anna Soubry | Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

The UK Government takes its export control responsibilities very seriously. All export licence applications are carefully assessed on a case by case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. A licence will not be issued if to do so would be inconsistent with any provision of the Criteria.

The suspension of licences will be considered by my Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills in circumstances where in the light of new evidence and information it would be considered that a proper risk assessment against the Consolidated Criteria would be difficult. At this time he considers that he does have sufficient information from a range of sources for a proper risk assessment to be made against the Criteria.

The UK ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 4 May 2010 and does not licence the export of these weapons.

Topical Questions **24 May 2016 | 611 cc394-5**

Asked by: Hilary Benn

Amnesty International reported this week that unexploded British-made BL-755 cluster submunitions have been found in Hayran, Yemen. We know what these weapons can do, especially to children, who mistake them for toys. Amnesty also reports that on 1 March two children near the village of Fard were herding goats when they found some other cluster bomblets. They played with them until one went off, killing the eight-year-old and severely injuring the 11-year-old. Does the Foreign Secretary regard the use of cluster bombs in civilian areas as a breach of international humanitarian law?

Answered by: Philip Hammond | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

As the right hon. Gentleman knows, the UK has long since given up the use of cluster munitions. Their use or supply is illegal under British law. As the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood), said earlier, the weapons described were manufactured decades ago, but

the Ministry of Defence is urgently investigating the allegations, and I believe there will be an urgent question on this subject shortly.

Asked by: Hilary Benn

I am grateful for that reply. As the House knows, we are a signatory to the convention banning the use of cluster munitions, but sadly Saudi Arabia is not. It is alleged that this particular type of BL-755 was designed to be dropped from one specific jet — the UK-manufactured Tornado used by the Saudi air force. Under the cluster munitions convention, member states should

“make best efforts to discourage States not party to this Convention from using cluster munitions.”

What steps has the right hon. Gentleman taken to discourage the use of British-made cluster munitions mounted on British-made jets by Saudi Arabia — an ally with which we have extensive military co-operation — and will he now commit to suspending arms sales to Saudi Arabia and to making the strongest possible representations that it must cease the use of cluster munitions in this conflict?

Answered by: Philip Hammond | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We need to be careful. There is no evidence yet that Saudi Arabia has used cluster munitions. The right hon. Gentleman is right that Saudi Arabia is not a signatory to the convention banning cluster munitions, but nor is the United States. We have always made it clear to the Saudi Arabians that we cannot support the use of cluster munitions in any circumstances, as to do so would be unlawful for Ministers and officials in this country. We believe we have an assurance from Saudi Arabia that cluster munitions have not been used in the conflict, but as I said earlier, the MOD is urgently investigating the allegations. I am sure that my ministerial colleague will have more to say in response to the UQ.

**Saudi Arabia: Arms Trade
11 May 2016 | 36869**

Asked by: Jess Phillips

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will suspend immediately UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

Answered by: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK Government takes its arms export responsibilities very seriously and operates one of the most robust arms export control regimes in the world. All export licence applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, taking account of all relevant factors at the time of the application. A licence will not be issued for any country, including Saudi Arabia, if to do so would be inconsistent with any provision of the mandatory Criteria. Our export licensing system allows us to respond quickly to changed circumstances, with the option to suspend or revoke

any export licence, including those for Saudi Arabia, where we consider that this is a necessary step.

The Government is satisfied that extant licences for Saudi Arabia are compliant with the UK's export licensing criteria.

China and Saudi Arabia: Human Rights
4 May 2016 | 35462

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent steps he has taken through the UN to promote the human rights situation in (a) China and (b) Saudi Arabia.

Answered by: Hugo Swire | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

In respect of China, the UK made a national statement on 15 March under Item 4 of the UN Human Rights Council about the human rights situation there. We highlighted our concerns about the application of due process and transparency of justice, as well as the importance of rights and freedoms in Hong Kong. We also supported the EU's Item 4 statement on China the same day. On 10 March, we signed up to a cross-regional Item 2 statement delivered at the Human Rights Council, alongside eleven other countries, on China's deteriorating human rights record. In respect of Saudi Arabia, the British Government's position on human rights is a matter of public record. We regularly make our views well known including through the UN Universal Periodic Review process and we supported the EU's Item 4 statement on Saudi Arabia on 15 March at the UN Human Rights Council, which noted a range of human rights concerns. We will continue to raise our human rights concerns with the Saudi Arabian authorities at the highest level.

Yemen: Military Intervention
18 April 2016 | 33935

Asked by: Tom Brake

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many cases of alleged international humanitarian law violations by the Saudi coalition within the Yemen conflict presented to the UK and Saudi authorities by NGOs have been investigated by the Government.

Answered by: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK has encouraged Saudi Arabia to investigate allegations of breaches of International Humanitarian Law.

The Saudi Arabian Government announced on 29 February that they are forming an independent committee to examine military activity in civilian areas in order to minimise possible civilian casualties; assess the Coalition's rules of engagement; assess accidents, verification and targeting procedures and advise how they can be improved; and

provide a clear, full and objective report for each investigation made including conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations for future actions.

We monitor the situation closely and we welcome any further information non-governmental organisations can provide to supplement the range of information we consider from a variety of sources.

Saudi Arabia: Arms Trade
14 April 2016 | 33214

Asked by: Michelle Donelan

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the oral contribution by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 28 January 2016, Official Report, column 426, on arms sales to Saudi Arabia, how many (a) arms export licences have been awarded to Saudi Arabia and (b) reviews of arms sales to Saudi Arabia have been conducted in 2016.

Answered by: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK Government is satisfied that extant licenses for Saudi Arabia are compliant with the UK's export licensing criteria. The Government takes its arms export responsibilities very seriously and operates one of the most robust arms exports control regimes in the world.

Information on military and dual use export licences is published as Official Statistics in the quarterly and annual reports on Strategic Export Controls which are all available to view on GOV.UK. These reports contain detailed information on export licences issued, refused or revoked, by destination (including Saudi Arabia). The statistics include the overall value, type (e.g. Military, Other) and a summary of the items covered by these licences. Information covering the period 1 October to 31 December 2015 will be published on 19 April 2016. The 1st quarter results for 2016 covering the period 1 January to 31 March 2016 will be published on 19 July 2016.

Since the outset of the conflict in Yemen, the Government has kept all extant licenses and new licensing to Saudi Arabia under continuous review, and has exercised special caution and vigilance in granting new licences for exports to Saudi Arabia, handling each on a case-by-case basis.

Saudi Arabia: Human Rights
13 April 2016 | 32721

Asked by: Andy Slaughter

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether during his meeting with Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Naif bin Abdulaziz in Riyadh on 28 March 2016 he (a) discussed human rights in that

country (b) made representations about Ali a Nimr, Dawood al Mahroon and Abdullah al Zaher.

Answered by: Michael Fallon | Department: Ministry of Defence

During my visit I had discussions with senior Saudi leadership on a range of defence and security issues, including the importance of international humanitarian law. The government of Saudi Arabia is well aware of our views on human rights and our opposition to the death penalty. Our expectation remains that these three individuals will not be executed.

**Yemen: Human Rights
11 April 2016 | 32498**

Asked by: Douglas Chapman

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what investigatory methods his Department uses for reports of potential breaches of international humanitarian law by UK allies in Yemen.

Answered by: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The Ministry of Defence monitors incidents of alleged International Humanitarian Law (IHL) violations using all available information which in turn informs our overall assessment of IHL compliance in Yemen. We consider a range of information from government sources, foreign governments, the media and international non-governmental organisations regarding reports of potential breaches of IHL.

We regularly raise the importance of compliance with IHL with the Saudi Arabian Government and other members of the military Coalition. The UK is not a member of the Saudi-led Coalition. British personnel are not involved in carrying out strikes, directing or conducting operations in Yemen or selecting targets and are not involved in the Saudi targeting decision-making process. However we have provided training and advice to Saudi Arabia to ensure continued compliance with IHL and minimise civilian casualties.

**Saudi Arabia: Arms Trade
17 March 2016 | 30754**

Asked by: Tulip Siddiq

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the oral statement by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Official Report, column 426, on arms sales to Saudi Arabia, what UK-supplied defence equipment has been used in Yemen; what arms export licences were issued for that equipment; and whether any arms export licences for that equipment have now been revoked.

Answered by: Michael Fallon | Department: Ministry of Defence

The Royal Saudi Air Force are flying British-built aircraft in Yemen, and have been provided with precision-guided Paveway weapons. The

Government is satisfied that extant licences for Saudi Arabia are fully compliant with the UK's export licences criteria.

No export licences for Saudi Arabia have been revoked in the last year. We continue to keep all arms sales under close review.

Yemen: Military Intervention
10 March 2016 | 29389

Asked by Tom Brake

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the response of the government of Saudi Arabia was to his recent representations on (a) the attacks in Yemen on the Médecins Sans Frontières hospitals and mobile clinic, (b) the airstrike on the Oxfam warehouse, (c) the reports by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch of attacks on civilians and civilian facilities including schools and (d) investigations into the use of cluster munitions.

Answered by: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Saudi Arabia have their own internal procedures for investigations and they announced more detail of how they investigate such incidents on 31 January. This includes a new investigation team outside of Coalition Command to review all existing procedures and suggest improvements.

Regarding allegations of cluster munition use, we have raised this issue with the Saudi Arabian authorities and, in line with our obligations under the Convention on Cluster Munitions, continue to encourage Saudi Arabia, as a non-party to the Convention, to accede to it.

Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia
2 March 2016 | 28765

Asked by: Roger Godsiff

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, what the UK's policy is on the resolution passed by the European Parliament in February 2016 in favour of an embargo on the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia.

Answered by: Anna Soubry | Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Her Majesty's Government takes its export responsibilities very seriously and operates one of the most robust arms export control regimes in the world.

All exports of arms and controlled military goods are assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, taking account of all relevant factors at the time of the application. This includes the UK's obligations under Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP.

The UK is satisfied that we are not in breach of our international obligations, including under the Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP. A licence will not be issued, to Saudi Arabia or any other destination, if to do so would be inconsistent with any provision of the mandatory UK Licensing Criteria.

Topical Questions
29 February 2016 | 606 c675

Asked by: Deidre Brock

Germany and Sweden have stopped selling weapons to Saudi Arabia as a result of concerns over Saudi actions in Yemen. Will the Government do likewise and impose a ban on arms sales to Saudi Arabia?

Answered by: Philip Dunne | Department: Ministry of Defence

All our defence exports to the King of Saudi Arabia or to any other country go through the same rigorous export control system that we have in place. We are proud of that system as it is more rigorous than that of any other country, and that will continue to be the case while this Government are in post.

Topical Questions
23 February 2016 | 606 c150

Asked by: Rushanara Ali

A recent UN report suggested that, in a disturbing violation of human rights, Saudi Arabia's military operation in Yemen is targeting civilians. Is the Minister confident that the UK Government are fulfilling their obligations under the arms trade treaty in relation to Saudi Arabia?

Answered by: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We have discussed, and are looking in detail at, the UN panel of experts report. It was done by satellite evidence — we have to bear it in mind that the experts did not actually visit the country itself. We have shared and discussed information with Saudi Arabia. I had a letter from the ambassador this week confirming that every effort is being made to follow human rights law in support of President Hadi and UN resolution 2216.

Saudi Arabia: Arms Trade
16 February 2016 | HL5340

Asked by: Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the response made by human rights groups to figures released by the UK that it sold Saudi Arabia over £1 billion of weapons and air-to-air missiles between July and September 2015.

Answered by: Lord Maude of Horsham | Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

The UK operates one of the most rigorous and transparent export control regimes in the world. No licence would be issued if to do so would contravene the UK's strict export control criteria. In this case a single licence accounted for 90% of the total value of potential exports authorised by the licences. This was for a long-term contract for the delivery of a new air-to-air munitions capability over a number of years and is unconnected to current operations by the Royal Saudi Air Force in Yemen.

Licences granted in a given period do not equate to goods shipped. The Department for Business (BIS) export licensing statistics only indicate the number and value of licences granted in a specified period, not the value of actual exports. Licences are usually valid for up to two years and the value of the licence therefore represents an estimate of future export value. As such, the value of licences granted in any one quarter will generally not be the same as the value of goods actually exported and does not provide an indication of goods shipped.

**Yemen: Armed Conflict
10 February 2016 | HL5530****Asked by: Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the draft report by the UN panel of experts on Yemen, which documents major violations of international humanitarian law by all sides to the Yemen conflict, including the Saudi-led coalition.

Answered by: Earl of Courtown | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Although this is a leaked document, we are aware of the report which has not yet been published, and are looking at the conclusions carefully. We recognise the importance of the work of the UN Panel of Experts and take the allegations raised in the report seriously. The Ministry of Defence monitors incidents of alleged International Humanitarian Law (IHL) violations using available information which in turn informs our overall assessment of IHL compliance in Yemen.

**Yemen
3 February 2016 | 605 c907****Asked by: Gisela Stuart**

If we are concerned about arms exports to Saudi Arabia, which fuel the conflict in Yemen, why are the Government not pressing ahead with setting up the cross-party quadripartite committee on arms exports, so that Parliament can control that better?

Answered by: Desmond Swayne | Department for International Development

As the Prime Minister pointed out, we have the most stringent and robust arms export regulations in the world. We have supported the UN Human Rights Council resolution, and we are committed to the investigation of every abuse or abrogation of international law.

Yemen

3 February 2016 | 605 c909

Asked by: Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh

The Government have so far approved £5,600 million of arms sales to Saudi Arabia, which several independent reports have connected to the bombing of civilian targets in Yemen. Given that figure and the independent reports, does the Minister believe that £75 million of aid delivered by the UK Government to Yemen represents a balanced approach to the conflict?

Answered by: Desmond Swayne | Department for International Development

Actually, it is £85 million — £85 million of life-saving aid. Warfare makes it more difficult to deliver that aid and that warfare is a consequence of the violent removal of the lawful Government of Yemen — not anything the United Kingdom has done.

Yemen: Military Intervention

2 February 2016 | HL5338

Asked by: Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the evidence available regarding human rights violations committed by the Saudi Arabia-led coalition in Yemen.

Answered by: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We remain deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Yemen. The UK supported the September UN Human Rights Council resolution which contains mechanisms for monitoring the human rights situation in Yemen. We continue to raise the importance of respect for human rights with all sides of the conflict. We used a wide range of evidence including credible non-governmental organisations, UN agencies and other sources of information to inform our assessment.

Engagements**27 January 2016 | 605 c262****Asked by: Jeremy Corbyn**

We have not had any answers on Google or the bedroom tax, but I ask the Prime Minister this. Shortly before coming into the Chamber, I became aware of the final report of the United Nations panel of experts on Yemen, which has been sent to the Government. It makes very disturbing reading. The report says that the panel has documented that coalition forces have

“conducted airstrikes targeting civilians and civilian objects, in violation of international humanitarian law, including camps for internally displaced persons and refugees...civilian residential areas; medical facilities; schools; mosques”.

These are very disturbing reports. In the light of this, will the Prime Minister agree to launch immediately an inquiry and a full review into the arms export licences to Saudi Arabia and suspend those arms sales until that review has been concluded?

Answered by: Prime Minister

As the right hon. Gentleman knows, we have the strictest rules for arms exports of almost any country anywhere in the world. Let me remind him that we are not a member of the Saudi-led coalition; we are not directly involved in the Saudi-led coalition’s operations; and British personnel are not involved in carrying out strikes. I will look at that report as I look at all other reports, but our arms exports are carefully controlled and we are backing the legitimate Government of the Yemen, not least because terrorist attacks planned in the Yemen would have a direct effect on people in our country. I refuse to run a foreign policy by press release, which is what he wants. I want a foreign policy that is in the interests of the British people.

Arms Trade**27 January 2016 | 23734****Asked by: Jamie Reed**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, on how many occasions he or his predecessor has given evidence to committees of the House on arms sales to (a) Saudi Arabia and (b) other countries in each of the last six years.

Answered by: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has provided evidence on UK arms exports to Saudi Arabia and other countries to committees of the House on a number of occasions in the last six years. From the start of the 2010-12 session until recently this has involved the submission of written and oral evidence to the Committees on Arms Export Controls (the CAEC) as part of their annual inquiries. The Rt Hon the Lord Hague of Richmond (the former Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) and the Secretary of State gave oral evidence to

the CAEC on global UK arms exports on 7 February and 19 December 2012 and 8 January 2014, and 1 December 2014, respectively. The former Secretary of State was questioned about arms exports to Saudi Arabia on 7 February and 19 December 2012. Details about such evidence, including the Government's response of 31 July 2015 to the most recent CAEC inquiry, can be found in the committee's published reports.

**Yemen: Military Intervention
19 January 2016 | 22276**

Asked by: Martyn Day

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will (a) take steps to ensure that Saudi Arabia works for an immediate ceasefire in Yemen and (b) support the establishment of an international, independent, impartial mechanism to investigate alleged violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law by all parties in that conflict.

Answered by: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We are urging all parties to the conflict to work towards resuming a meaningful and sustainable ceasefire that is respected by all sides. We are also doing all we can to support the UN to convene a further round of UN-facilitated peace talks over the coming weeks and firmly believe that a political solution is the best way to bring long-term stability to Yemen.

The Resolution on Yemen adopted at the Human Rights Council Session in September 2015 committed the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights to work with the Government of Yemen to help them investigate human rights abuses and violations. We urge the Government of Yemen to co-operate fully with this process. Yemen will remain on the Human Rights Council's agenda: an oral report on developments will be given at the next session in March 2016 (31st session) and a written report will be presented to the Council in September 2016 (33rd session).

**Saudi Arabia: Capital Punishment
18 January 2016 | 21362**

Asked by: Matthew Offord

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, for what reasons his Department did not include Saudi Arabia in Appendix One of its publication entitled HMG Strategy for the Abolition of the Death Penalty 2010-2015.

Answered by: David Lidington | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The criteria used in 2010 to draw up the list of priority countries within the "HMG Strategy for the Abolition of the Death Penalty 2010-2015" are set out in that document. They are:

1. The ability to make progress against three goals (1/ an increase in the number of abolitionist or moratorium countries; 2/ a reduction in the numbers of executions; and 3/ ensuring EU minimum standards are met)
2. Willingness of country to engage on the abolition of the death penalty
3. Numbers of executions
4. Lack of minimum standards/transparency
5. Global influence of country concerned/ impact of country's abolition elsewhere in the world

The judgement made in 2010 was that available Government resources should focus on countries ready to engage in a dialogue about capital punishment likely to lead to reform. Many of the countries prioritised in 2010, including Tunisia, Morocco, China and the USA, have implemented reforms in the intervening five years. For example, the Caribbean has maintained its de facto moratorium. The most recent comprehensive list of countries in which we actively oppose the use of the death penalty was included in the FCO's 2014 Annual Human Rights and Democracy Report.

5. Debates

Europe, human rights and keeping people safe at home and abroad

HC Deb 24 May 2016, Vol 611 cc425-506

The Gulf

HC Deb 4 May 2016, Vol 609 cc73-98WH

Saudi Arabia: Executions

HL Deb 1 February 2016, Vol 768 cc1579-81

Arms sales to Saudi Arabia

HC Deb 28 January 2016, Vol 605 cc426-36

Saudi Arabia: Executions

HL Deb 13 January 2016, Vol 768 cc268-70

Saudi Arabia

HC Deb 5 January 2016, Vol 604 cc93-111

Middle East

HC Deb 30 November 2015, Vol 603 cc46-125

Yemen

HC Deb 22 October 2015, Vol 600 cc460-447WH

Human Rights (Saudi Arabia)

HC Deb 21 July 2015, Vol 598 cc403-26WH

Yemen

HC Deb 24 February 2015, Vol 593 cc92-65WH

6. Statements

Arms Sales: Saudi Arabia

HL Deb 28 January 2016, Vol 768 cc1145-9

Saudi Arabia

HC Deb 5 January 2016, Vol 604 cc92-111

Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria

HC Deb 25 March 2014, 578 cc9-14WS

7. Early Day Motions

CLUSTER MUNITIONS USE

EDM 78 (session 2016-17)

24 May 2016

Tom Brake

That this House notes with grave concern that, according to Amnesty International, fragments of UK-manufactured cluster munitions have been uncovered in Yemen; denounces the use of cluster munitions due to their indiscriminate and disproportionate nature; believes that any indiscriminate use of cluster munitions by Saudi Arabian forces in Yemen amounts to a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and is a violation of international humanitarian law; calls on the Government to suspend all arms exports to Saudi Arabia until international humanitarian law violations have been investigated and disproved; and urges the Government to call for a full independent inquiry into the use of cluster munitions in the Yemen war to establish the truth about such allegations.

EMBARGO ON ARMS SALES TO SAUDI ARABIA

EDM 1170 (session 2015-16)

1 March 2016

Tom Brake

That this House calls for an immediate embargo on the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia in light of alleged international humanitarian law violations relating to the conflict in Yemen; acknowledges that on 25 February 2016 the European Parliament voted for a European Union-wide embargo on the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia, citing the disastrous humanitarian situation as a result of Saudi-led military intervention in Yemen as a reason for this resolution being passed; condemns the use of cluster munitions for indiscriminate bombing in Yemen by the Saudi Arabian military; is concerned that the Government is abetting violations of international humanitarian law through providing arms to Saudi Arabian authorities; further calls on the Government to publicly condemn Saudi Arabia for the use of cluster munitions and any violations of international humanitarian law; and calls on the Government to ensure that there is an independent inquiry into the use of cluster munitions and any violations of international humanitarian law.

RAIF BADAWI - SAKHAROV PRIZE FOR FREEDOM OF THOUGHT**EDM 915 (session 2015-16)****6 January 2016****Tom Brake**

That this House congratulates Raif Badawi for being awarded the 2015 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought; applauds him for advocating freedom of thought and expression; expresses dismay that he was unable to collect his award in person due to being imprisoned in Saudi Arabia; is appalled that he has also been fined one million Saudi Riyal and sentenced to one thousand lashes as part of his 10 year sentence; urges the Government to press King Salman bin Abdulaziz to release Raif Badawi from prison so that he may be reunited with his family; and calls on the Government to challenge King Salman bin Abdulaziz on Saudi Arabia's concerning record of suppressing freedom of thought and expression.

UK ARMS SALES TO SAUDI ARABIA**Margaret Ferrier****EDM 665 (session 2015-16)****5 November 2015**

That this House believes that Saudi Arabia is ruled by one of the most repressive regimes in the world which does not allow freedom of expression or association; notes with concern the systematic human rights abuses that occur within Saudi Arabia, including the extensive use of the death penalty, the sentencing to death of individuals arrested as juveniles, the flogging of those who question the ruling regime, the lack of basic rights for women and immigrant workers, the repression of homosexuals and those who do not adhere to the state religion; views with alarm the actions of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen with the increasing number of civilian casualties and people displaced from their homes; further notes that the UK is a major supplier of military equipment to Saudi Arabia, and that such sales are given UK official and military support; and calls on the Government to end all military exports to, and military collaboration with Saudi Arabia.

8. Further reading

House of Commons Library papers

Yemen at war

Commons Briefing Paper
CBP-7184
26 May 2016

UK relations with the Gulf

Commons Debate Pack
CDP-2016-0097
29 April 2016

Conflict in Yemen

Commons Debate Pack
CDP-2016-0032
1 February 2016

Committee details

Committees on Arms Export Controls

Details of inquiries and publications

United Nations report

Children and Armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General

UN General Assembly | UN Security Council
A/70/836 | S/2016/360
20 April 2016 (published June 2016)

Other organisation

Report on torture in Saudi Arabia submitted to UN Committee Against Torture

Cilina Nasser
European Saudi Organization for Human Rights
30 March 2016

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