**Amnesty International**



**LOCAL GROUP MONTHLY ACTION**

**ACTIVISM TEAM, Amnesty International UK**

**HRAC, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA**

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**January 2016**

**UK: Stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia**

A devastating conflict has been ongoing in Yemen since 2014, with a coalition led by Saudi Arabia carrying out airstrikes against an armed rebel group, the Huthis, who took over the capital of Yemen, Sanaa, in September 2014. Hundreds of ordinary people have been killed or injured as a result.

During this time the UK Government has been supplying arms to the Saudi Government. Amnesty has been very concerned about this and have found that the UK Government have been breaking international and national laws.

**What we would like you to do?**

**Petition**

Attached is a petition calling on the UK Government to halt all arms exports to Saudi Arabia and its coalition of all weapons that risk being used in the Yemen conflict to commit violations of international law. Please get as many people to sign this and return them us.

**Deadline: End of February for a hand in to the Prime Minster in March.**

**Letter to local media**

This conflict is getting little press coverage and the government is not feeling enough pressure to stop arming the Saudi’s. We want to make sure people across the country know about this conflict and the UK’s role. We’ve attached a template letter. Please personalise the letter and send it to your local newspaper, drawing attention to the UK’s role in arming Saudi Arabia and breaking international law.

Please scan and send any coverage you get to: [activism@amnesty.org.uk](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cftalaghani%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CTemporary%20Internet%20Files%5CContent.Outlook%5CIXHD0E7U%5Cactivism%40amnesty.org.uk)

**CONTENTS GOT QUERIES OR WANT TO DO MORE?**

If you have any queries about this action please contact:

Paul Dawson, Amnesty Country coordinators for  **Saudi Arabia**

**Paul.dawson@amnesty.org.uk**

* Action instructions
* Background information
* Petition
* Sample letter

**MONTHLY ACTION**

**Background info**

**UK: Stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia**

UK sale of arms to Saudi Arabia

In the midst of this crisis the UK has been supplying arms to the Saudi Government, including combat aircraft and bombs for use in the Yemen campaign. In the last 5 years, arms export licenses worth some £5.5 billion have been authorised for Saudi Arabia. Since the conflict began the UK has issued a further 37 arms export licenses for combat aircraft and their spare parts and bombs worth a staggering £1.7 billion.

UK government found to be breaking the law

In April 2013 David Cameron welcomed the United Nations’ adoption of the international Arms Trade Treaty, calling it a “landmark agreement that will save lives and ease the immense human suffering caused by armed conflict around the world.” Many of you will have been part of our campaign to get an international Arms Trade Treaty.

Therefore, under international law the UK is not allowed to export weapons and related equipment where there is a clear risk that those weapons could be used in violation of international law, such as to commit human rights abuses like those currently taking place in Yemen.

Amnesty has been very concerned about this, so with the organisation Saferworld\* we asked for an independent legal opinion to see if the Arms Trade Treaty and UK and European laws were being broken – and that opinion found they were. Any transfer of weapons or other military items by the UK to Saudi Arabia that are capable of being used in the Yemen conflict would constitute a breach by the UK of its obligation under domestic, European and international law.

\**Saferworld* is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. [www.saferworld.org.uk](http://www.saferworld.org.uk)

What we want the UK Government to do

The UK should immediately stop all authorisations and transfers of relevant weapons and items to Saudi Arabia and its partners that risk being used in the Yemen conflict and only resume such transfers once it is satisfied that there is no longer a clear risk that these weapons could be used to fuel atrocities.

FIND OUT MORE

For more info please visit:

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/uk-stop-selling-arms-saudi-arabia>

Amnesty Blog

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/yes-minister-it-human-rights-issue/yemen-conflict-uk-has-blood-its-hands>

Amnesty annual report - Yemen

[www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/yemen/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/yemen/)

BBC country profile - Yemen

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14704852>

UK: Stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia



Dear Prime Minister,

I call on you to:

* Suspend all arms transfers, to members of the coalition carrying out attacks in Yemen, including weapons, arms, munition and ammunition, parts and components and other equipment that pose a substantial risk that they could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian law in this conflict;
* Condemn the use of cluster munitions in the Yemen crisis;
* Call for an international investigation into the human rights violations committed by all sides.

| **Name** | **Address**  | **Postcode** | **Signature** |
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By giving us your details you are requesting updates about Amnesty’s work and the work of Amnesty Groups in your area. If at any time you would prefer not to receive updates from Amnesty, please tell us at sct@amnesty.org.uk - The information provided will be passed on to the addressee of this Action. Please return to **Amnesty International UK, HRAC, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA by end of February 2016.**

*Dear Sir/Madam,*

The war in Yemen has been underreported in the UK, and people might not be aware of the horrors being inflicted on the population. More than 5,000 civilians have died in conflict, many as a result of Saudi-led airstrikes on the country.

Amnesty International has uncovered evidence that UK-made missiles were used to destroy a ceramics factory, a civilian target, and that schools have been deliberately targeted with more than 1,000 of them destroyed beyond use. The targeting of schools which are not being used for military purposes, as these weren’t, is a war crime.

The UK continues to sell arms to Saudi Arabia and a recent legal opinion from eminent lawyers, confirmed Amnesty’s long-held view that the continued supply of weapons and equipment which could be used to commit abuses in Yemen, breaks the law. The lawyers found that the sales breach UK domestic law, EU law and the Global Arms Trade Treaty which the UK once championed.

There is a real risk that the misery of civilians in Yemen, was ‘Made in Britain’. Please join Amnesty in calling on the UK government to immediately halt these appalling arms sales.

*Yours sincerely,*

*[name of Amnesty group]*