



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

23rd April 2021

Dear Confront,

RE: MILITARY EXPORTS TO SAUDI ARABIA

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of military exports to Saudi Arabia; your comments upon which I have read with interest.

I fully appreciate your concerns about military exports to Saudi Arabia. I want to reassure you that in accordance with the Court of Appeal's judgement in June 2019, the Secretary of State for International Trade has now retaken licensing decisions regarding military exports to Saudi Arabia for possible use in the conflict in Yemen, on the correct legal basis.

Export licences are not granted when there is a clear risk that the equipment might be used in the commission of a serious violation of International Humanitarian Law. The protection of civilians is the cornerstone of International Humanitarian Law.

I have been assured that each application is carefully assessed against the *Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria* and that a licence will not be granted if to do so would be a breach of the criteria. A range of sources are used when making assessments including NGOs, international organisations and our diplomatic posts overseas. Licences may also be reviewed, suspended and revoked where necessary.

Regarding Yemen, I am deeply concerned by the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis. I fully support the efforts of the UN Secretary-General and the UN Special Envoy's call for all parties to engage in urgent political talks and de-escalate the conflict. UK support to Yemen since the beginning of the conflict now totals over £1 billion and I strongly welcome the Government's announcement that it will provide £87 million of aid funding this year.

Finally, I understand that President Biden has frozen some arms sales to Saudi Arabia. The Prime Minister has spoken to President Biden where they discussed the United Kingdom and the United States' longstanding relationship and their commitment to build on this partnership in the years ahead.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you, then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE