

DIT-137-0000048-A



FCS/16/2032

Secretary of State for International Trade

SAUDI ARABIA: EXPORT LICENSING

Thank you for your letter of 17 November in which you asked that your Department be updated regularly on progress [REDACTED]

I continue to monitor events in Yemen carefully, in particular with regard to Saudi Arabian compliance with IHL. I recently received a further IHL update from officials. As you know, I also visited Riyadh on 11 December and was able to discuss these issues at first hand with the Saudi leadership.

My conclusion is that since I last wrote to you there has been an encouraging positive trend, with the Saudis taking substantive measures to improve and increase reliability of practices and procedures in order to reduce the risks of Coalition action resulting in a serious breach of IHL. I note that the number of incidents of concern has declined. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

While a cessation of hostilities (CoH) that is adhered to would definitively remove the risk of violations of IHL, we recognise that the ongoing efforts are dependent on all parties' willingness to find agreement.

My conclusion is that [REDACTED] significant progress has been made in the period since 31 October and the Criterion 2(c) threshold has not been met. I asked my officials to seek advice [REDACTED]

In the light of this advice, I confirm that at present I am satisfied that issuing export licenses for air combat platforms and associated items which could be used by the Royal Saudi Air Force in the conflict in Yemen would be consistent with the requirements of Criterion 2(c) of the Consolidated Criteria.

In reaching this conclusion, I am aware of the reported US decision to halt exports of precision guided munitions (PGM) to Saudi Arabia, and note that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] have received clarification that the decision is not a block on all PGM exports, but related to one case only. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

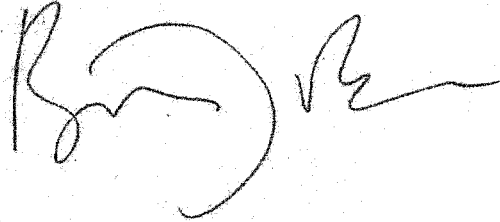
The issue of export licensing to Saudi Arabia continues to be very finely balanced and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I will continue to keep the situation under close and careful review and will inform you immediately if there is any change in my assessment of whether the Criterion 2(c) threshold has been met.

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

I am copying this letter to the Secretaries of State for Defence and International Development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Boris Johnson', written in a cursive style.

THE RT HON BORIS JOHNSON MP

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
15 December 2016