



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss
Secretary of State for International Trade
3 Whitehall Place, Westminster,
London SW1A 2HP

20 June 2020

Dear Liz,

As you will know, today marks exactly one year since the Appeal Court ruled that the government should cease licensing the export of arms to Saudi Arabia for use in the war in Yemen, and ordered your department to review all extant licences in light of that judgement.

You were asked in the House of Commons on Thursday whether that review of extant licences was complete, and if not, why not. You refused to answer either question, so we are left to assume that – despite being ordered to review these licences by the courts, and having twelve months to do so – your department has simply chosen not to comply.

This creates the illogical situation where a UK company that applies for a licence today to export arms for use in Yemen will have that application rejected, but another company that was granted its licence prior to 20th June last year may export exactly the same arms without restriction.

Meanwhile, the slaughter of innocent people in Yemen continues. As was pointed out to you in the House of Commons this week, at least a dozen civilians travelling by road in Saada province were killed by an alleged Saudi air strike on Monday, four of them children.

Lise Grande, the UN's humanitarian coordinator for Yemen, has condemned this latest attack as "terrible" and "unjustified", and noted that it was just one of "*several incidents involving multiple civilian casualties...reported since the end of May*".

For five years now, the parties we represent in the House of Commons have spoken out against the targeting of civilians in Yemen by the Saudi-led coalition, and for five years, successive government ministers have ignored our pleas to stop selling them arms.

However, you cannot go on indefinitely ignoring the order of the Appeal Court, and as a former Secretary of State for Justice, we would expect you both to know and respect that.

We therefore ask you as a matter of urgency to spell out a clear timetable to complete the review that you have been ordered to conduct into extant licences for the export of arms for use in Yemen, and to report back to Parliament at the earliest opportunity on the findings.

We note that you told the Chair of the International Trade Select Committee on Thursday that you would be happy to appear before his committee this week, so we are copying this letter to members of the committee so that they too can raise this issue with you then.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Emily Thornberry MP, Shadow Secretary of State for International Trade

Stewart Hosie MP, Scottish National Party Spokesperson on International Trade

Sarah Olney MP, Liberal Democrat Party Spokesperson on International Trade

Hywel Williams MP, Plaid Cymru Spokesperson on International Trade

Caroline Lucas MP, Green Party Spokesperson on International Trade