



## **Supporter Pack: Yemen War Anniversary Lobby Day on 10th March 2022**

Thank you very much for registering for CAAT's Lobby of Parliament for Yemen on Thursday 10th March, the seventh anniversary of the war in Yemen.

Please read this pack thoroughly, and contact [katie@caat.org.uk](mailto:katie@caat.org.uk) with any questions.

**We will have a pre-lobby day briefing over Zoom on Monday 7th March from 6 - 7 pm.** Please attend using this link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84860867460>

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#### **1. Setting up a meeting with your MP**

- Register for the Lobby Day by requesting a meeting with your MP on 10th March. <https://caat.org.uk/events/yemen-lobby-day-2022/>
- Has your MP responded yet? Please fill in this online form to let us know if your MP has responded to your request for a meeting either positively or negatively, or not at all. If your MP is not available to meet on 10th March, then please try to speak with them on a different day. <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScWz5oaYHzLPVIMCqr9WI B7wTWr5rkfk6nnvVpXQv35eDu7hQ/viewform>

**Your MP is expected to set up the zoom meeting and send a link to you. If they agreed to meet with you, but not yet done this, then please ask them politely for the link to the meeting.**

## **2. Preparing for the meeting.**

- On Monday 7th March, 6-7 pm, there will be a pre-Lobby day briefing over Zoom. Please join this meeting to discuss what will happen on the Lobby Day itself. The Zoom link to join is: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84860867460>
- Please try to stick to Lobby Day speaking notes outlined below. Each meeting will usually last for approximately 30 minutes, and we would like to emphasise these topics.
- If you are unable to attend the Zoom meeting set up with your MP for any reason, please email them as soon as possible to let them know.

## **3. Speaking notes**

This is a guide to help you structure the meeting with your MP. Each meeting will be unique, but try to steer the discussion to raise as many of the key points below as possible.

At the start of the meeting briefly introduce yourself, explain that you are taking part in Lobby Day organised by Campaign Against Arms Trade, and thank your MP for taking the time to meet with you. It is also useful to ask your MP to confirm how much time you have at this stage.

The purpose of meeting with your MP is to try to get them to take action. The best way to do this is by engaging politely. Make sure to ask your MP to do something concrete at the end of the meeting.

CAAT has published a detailed briefing paper, '**Seven Years of War: UK weapons and Saudi Arabia's devastating assault on Yemen**' for supporters and MPs on the Lobby Day. You can read this paper ahead of the Lobby Day, and you can also share with your MP.

<https://caat.org.uk/publications/seven-years-of-war/>

## Speaking notes

- Stop the UK arms trade to Saudi Arabia
- UK arms export controls
- CAAT's legal case
- Increase in air strikes on civilian areas
- Accountability
- Ask your MP to...

### Stop the UK Arms Trade to Saudi Arabia

#### Key points

- The war in Yemen has been raging for 7 years, and has led to an estimated **377,000 deaths** through direct and indirect causes, according to the UN.
- Saudi coalition air strikes have killed 8,967 civilians in attacks targeting residential areas, schools, hospitals, civilian gatherings, infrastructure, and other civilian targets.
- **CAAT estimates that the UK has sold over £22 billion worth of arms to Saudi Arabia since the war began.**
- UK arms, including Tornado and Typhoon aircraft, bombs and missiles, and crucial maintenance, training, and support to the Saudi Air Force, have played a central role in the Saudi war.
- The war has created one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, **with 5 million people on the brink of famine.** Saudi and Houthi actions have played a central role in causing this crisis, and both have been accused of using starvation as a tool of war.
- **There has been virtually no accountability for war crimes committed by all parties to the war.** The UN Group of Eminent Experts (GEE), charged with investigating abuses by all sides, had its mandate cancelled last October, after heavy Saudi lobbying.

- It is notable that the upsurge in Saudi airstrikes targeting civilians at the end of 2021 and in 2022, began soon after the end of the UN Group of Eminent Experts' activities.

### **UK arms export controls**

- The UK's arms export control laws require the government to deny export licences for arms sales if ***“there is a clear risk that the goods might be used to commit serious violations of international humanitarian law”*** (criterion 2c).
- There is ample evidence that the Saudi coalition has repeatedly violated international humanitarian law (IHL), killing large numbers of civilians and destroying crucial civilian buildings. The use of UK weapons as part of this campaign is not in doubt.
- Yet, the government continues to insist that there is no “clear risk” that such weapons will be used to commit violations.

### **CAAT's legal case**

- In June 2019, the Court of Appeal ruled that the **government's approach to deciding on export licences to Saudi Arabia was “irrational and therefore unlawful”**, as it failed to properly assess the record of past violations of IHL by the Coalition. The government was required to stop issuing new export licences.
- In July 2020, the government announced that it had completed its review, and had found that there were only a small number of “isolated incidents” of possible IHL violations, that did not constitute a “pattern”.
- The government resumed new export licencing, and since then has authorised **£1.7 billion in new arms sales to Saudi Arabia, including £964 million related to bombs and air-to-surface missiles**.
- In response to this, CAAT launched a new judicial review case in October 2020, and in April 2021 was given permission by the courts to proceed to a full hearing. The hearing will take place on 7–9 June 2022.

### **Increase in air strikes on civilian areas**

- Since December 2021 there has been an upsurge in air strikes on civilian areas, and a large increase in civilian casualties. The worst single incident was the **bombing of a prison in the northern city of Sadaa, killing over 70 civilians.**
- January 2022 was the most violent month in the Saudi-led air war in Yemen in more than five years. Yemen Data Project recorded 139 civilian deaths and 287 civilians injured in Saudi coalition airstrikes in January.
- An airstrike in Al-Hudaydah on 20 January resulted in a countrywide loss of internet connectivity for four days.

### **Accountability**

- One international mechanism did exist – a Group of Eminent Experts (GEE) on Yemen, established in 2017 by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), to investigate human rights abuses by all parties to the conflict. Its reports were significant in documenting these crimes at an official UN level, **and the GEE frequently called for an end to arms sales to all warring parties, including the UK.** However, in October 2021, the UNHRC voted to end the GEE’s mandate, following heavy lobbying by Saudi Arabia.

### **Ask your MP to:**

1. **Support an end all UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia, UAE, and other active members of the coalition bombing Yemen,** including all training, maintenance, and support for the Saudi Air Force, in line with Criteria 2c of the Strategic Export Licensing Criteria, and in light of the overwhelming evidence of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen.
2. **Call for an investigation into the ongoing failure of the UK’s arms export controls** to ensure adherence to International Humanitarian Law, by means of an inquiry by the Committees for Arms Export Control.
3. Promote efforts within the UN General Assembly, Security Council, and Human Rights Council to **reestablish an international, impartial and**

**independent mechanism to investigate war crimes** and human rights abuses committed by all parties to the war.

4. Call on the Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office to use the UK's position as penholder at the UN Security Council, **and in particular the UK's forthcoming Presidency of the Security Council in April**, to push forward urgent diplomatic efforts to end the conflict.
  
5. **Call for an increase in emergency humanitarian aid to Yemen**, in line with the Integrated Review's commitment to reestablish spending 0.7% of gross national income on development, and work with international partners to ensure that aid efforts, in particular the World Food Programme's activities, are fully funded.