

LCHR Saudi Arabia CLP Motion

This CLP notes that:

- a) The Saudi government is responsible for horrific human rights abuses carried out domestically, from court-ordered beheadings and floggings to the repression of free speech, and severe violence against Shia minorities and women, including the imprisonment and torture of female activists.
- b) The actions of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen have contributed to a humanitarian crisis that has resulted in almost 80% of the population needing assistance and protection, including acute malnutrition for two million children under the age of five.
- c) The UK government has licensed the sale of at least £4.7 billion of military equipment to Saudi Arabia since 2015.
- d) In June this year campaigners won an appeal to a legal challenge over the UK government's decision to allow arms sales to Saudi Arabia, which is engaged in the war in Yemen. A judge ruled that ministers "made no concluded assessments of whether the Saudi-led coalition had committed violations of international humanitarian law in the past, during the Yemen conflict, and made no attempt to do so". The government has sought permission to appeal.

Labour has called for a full inquiry and the permanent end of all arms sales to Riyadh. However, the Labour Campaign for Human Rights is calling on the Labour Party to go further with a set of sixteen recommendations for the future of Britain's relationship with Saudi Arabia. These include:

- Exert diplomatic pressure to uphold the UN-brokered Stockholm agreement and turn it into a framework for a long-term political solution to the conflict in Yemen.
- An international investigation into abuses human rights abuses during the Yemeni Civil War.
- End all co-operation between the UK and Saudi militaries, including non-military training contracts.
- Put measures in place to mitigate job losses in the arms industry.
- Adopt a more rigorous export licensing system that prioritises human rights.
- Publicly and expressly call on Saudi Arabia to end its abusive domestic human rights practices.

This CLP believes that the issue of UK arms sales used in breach of international violations is in direct contradiction with everything the party stands for. A Labour government should not stand by while our allies break international law.

This Constituency Labour Party therefore calls on the Labour Party to adopt the Labour Campaign for Human Rights recommendations in full, and we will write to our MP to inform them of the decision.

The full list of recommendations are as follows:

On Yemen

1. The UK should exert diplomatic pressure to implement the UN-brokered Stockholm Agreement and turn it into a framework for a long-term political solution to the conflict in Yemen.
2. The government should exert diplomatic pressure on all parties to ensure that the Al-Hudaydah port ceasefire is upheld, and that the Saudi-led coalition lifts the de facto blockade on Yemen's ports and Sana'a airport to allow for the delivery of humanitarian aid, food and basic commodities.
3. The government should take steps to strengthen to the UN peace process, including by: (1) appointing a Special Representative to reinforce the work of the UN Special Envoy in Yemen; (2) providing specialist personnel to the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen to ensure compliance with Security Council Resolution 2216 (demanding an end to violence in Yemen); and (3) pushing for further UN security council resolutions to stop the fighting and resume humanitarian aid deliveries if political dialogue fails.
4. The UK must ensure an independent international investigation into violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws by calling on Saudi Arabia to cooperate fully with the investigation and findings of the Group of Eminent Experts mandated by the UN Human Rights Council.
5. Condemn the repeated breaches of international laws by the Saudi-led coalition.

On arms sales, military co-operation and intelligence sharing

6. The UK should be more transparent about its relationship with Saudi Arabia.
7. The government should follow the precedent set by Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden and immediately suspend existing licences for arms exports to Saudi Arabia that are likely to be used in violation of international humanitarian law, and also undermine humanitarian initiatives supported by DFID.
8. Measures should be put in place to either to prevent job losses or mitigate the impact of job losses in the arms industry, including through MOD procurement and a defence diversification strategy to oversee the transfer of employment from arms production to civil production through converting employee skills.
9. The UK government should adopt a more rigorous and transparent system of arms export licensing that takes human rights into account.
10. The UK should end all co-operation between the UK and Saudi militaries, as well as non-military training contracts, such as the College of Policing programme. All existing programmes should be investigated to determine whether British training has directly aided the commission of human rights abuses.

11. Parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee should investigate the UK's intelligence-sharing relationship with Saudi Arabia to quantify the benefits that it provides to the UK.

On Human Rights

12. The UK should call on Saudi Arabia to cooperate with the international and independent inquiry into the murder of Jamal Khashoggi led by the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, Agnes Callamard.
13. The UK should publicly and expressly call on Saudi Arabia to end its abusive human rights practices. In particular, to stop using death penalty and immediately and unconditionally release prisoners of conscience, including women's rights activists, human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists and writers.
14. The UK should urge Saudi Arabia to repeal or reform legislation that restrict fundamental rights, including the AntiCybercrime Law 2007, Law on Associations 2015, and Counter-terrorism Law 2017.
15. The UK should call on Saudi Arabia to ratify key international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.
16. The UK should demand that Saudi Arabia cooperate fully with UN human rights mechanisms and for it to be removed from the UN Human Rights Council.