



Department for International Trade

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1 August 2018

Dear Jo,

Thank you for your email of 20 July to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, attaching correspondence from your constituent about the sale of military equipment to Saudi Arabia. I am replying as this matter falls within my portfolio.

The UK Government has been very active in providing humanitarian support to the people of Yemen and has urged the Saudi-led coalition to take all reasonable steps to facilitate rapid and safe access for humanitarian assistance, as well as essential imports of food and fuel. The UK Government has also been at the forefront of diplomatic efforts to secure a political solution to the continuing conflict. Resuming peace talks is the top priority and we welcome and fully support the work of the UN Special Envoy for Yemen, in trying to achieve a political settlement, and commend his efforts to date.

The UK Government takes its export control responsibilities very seriously and operates one of the most robust and transparent export control regimes in the world. We rigorously examine every application on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, known as the Consolidated Criteria.

We will not license the export of items where we assess that there is a clear risk that they might be used in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law or international human rights law.

Our assessment of each export licence against the Consolidated Criteria takes into account our obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty and other relevant rules of international law.

The key issue for assessing military exports to Saudi Arabia that might be used in Yemen is Criterion 2c of the Consolidated Criteria – whether there is a clear risk that the exports might be used in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law.

The use of Open Individual Export Licences (OIELs) does not mean a lack of scrutiny: applications for OIELs are thoroughly assessed against the Consolidated Criteria on a case-

by-case basis. Terms and conditions for their use will vary depending on the goods and export destinations and exporters using OIELs are subject to audit by DIT compliance inspectors.

The approval of airborne munitions under OIELs before the current conflict in Yemen is a matter of public record. Information about these licences is set out in our published licensing statistics for 2013 and 2014:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/strategic-export-controls-licensing-data>.

Information about all licences issued, refused or revoked is published each quarter and summarised in our annual reports.

I hope this reply assists you in responding to your constituent.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Graham', with a stylized flourish at the end.

GRAHAM STUART MP

Minister for Investment, Department for International Trade