



Department for
International Trade

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25 JUL 2019

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Our ref: MCSL2019/03137

17th July 2019

Dear Jo

Thank you for your email of 5th July to the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, Secretary of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, referring to correspondence from your constituents about the Court of Appeal judgment of 20th June and military exports to Saudi Arabia.

The UK Government takes its export control responsibilities very seriously. Each export licence application is rigorously assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. A licence will not be granted if to do so would be inconsistent with these Criteria.

The Court of Appeal judgment is about how decisions were made in relation to one element of one of these Criteria; that is, Criterion 2c which relates to international humanitarian law. It is not about whether decisions to grant export licences were right or wrong but whether the decision-making process was rational. Although the decision-making process was found deficient in one respect, the judgment acknowledges that the processes of analysis used to make licensing decisions were rigorous and robust.

The Government disagrees with the judgment in relation to decision-making under Criterion 2c and has been granted permission to appeal. While we consider the implications of the judgment for decision-making, we will not grant any new licences for exports to Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners- UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain and Egypt- which might be used in the conflict in Yemen.

Given that we do not agree with the judgment, and the matter is still subject to legal proceedings, it would not be appropriate to hold a public inquiry into this matter.

Regarding the war in Yemen, the Government agrees that a political settlement is the only way to bring long-term stability to Yemen and to address the worsening humanitarian crisis. The Yemeni parties must engage constructively and in good faith to overcome obstacles and find a political solution to end the conflict. The UK has played a leading role in diplomatic efforts, including bringing together key international actors to try to find a peaceful solution. The Foreign Secretary visited the region on 1st - 4th March 2019 in a display of the UK's support for efforts to secure peace. His visit to Aden on 3rd March was the first visit to Yemen by a Western foreign minister since the start of the conflict in 2015. In addition, the UK hosted a meeting of the Yemen Quad on 22nd June, where representatives of the UK, US, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates reiterated their support for UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths.

The UK calls on all parties to the conflict in Yemen to exercise restraint, comply fully with International Humanitarian Law and implement the Stockholm Agreements without delay to improve the humanitarian situation.

We remain deeply concerned by this humanitarian crisis – the largest in the world. Over 24 million people – nearly 80% of the population – are in need of humanitarian assistance. On 24th February, the Prime Minister announced a new UK aid package that will provide £200 million of funding for the 2019/20 financial year in response to the ongoing situation. This brings our total contribution to the humanitarian crisis to £770 million since the conflict began.

I hope this is useful in responding to your constituents.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham', written in a cursive style.

GRAHAM STUART MP
Minister for Investment
Department for International Trade