



DEBATE PACK

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Yemen

Main Chamber Thursday 12 January 2017 Backbench business

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1. Summary

With the conflict raging on since early 2015, Yemen has been labelled by Amnesty International as the “forgotten war”. Since the Saudi-led intervention started in March 2015 against Iran-backed Shi’a Houthi forces, the Saudis and their allies have managed to push back the Houthis from Aden. However Aden remains far from secure, with a number of key officials having been assassinated, and the influence of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIS/Daesh is growing. Heavy fighting has been ongoing in the south of the country, exacerbating the humanitarian situation there. The Houthi militias have been accused of recruiting child soldiers. Many analysts see the war in Yemen as a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

There have been allegations that UK-supplied arms have been used to commit violations of international humanitarian law and that UK personnel are close to the Saudi-led coalition’s targeting decisions. The Defence Secretary told the House of Commons on 19 December 2016 that the Saudi Government had informed the UK it had used B-755 cluster munitions supplied by the UK in the 1980s in an attack on northern Yemen in January 2016. The Saudi Government has said will no longer use these munitions in its military operations. The UK Government continues to resist calls to suspend arms sales to Saudi Arabia – a stance which is set to be the subject of judicial review in early February 2017.

2. Press Articles

The following is a selection of recent press and media articles relevant to this debate.

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The Independent

[The latest casualty of Yemen's civil war? The economy](#)

Sadarsan Raghavan

27 December 2016

New York Times

[Weakened Militarily, ISIS Still Has Power to Sow Deadly Mayhem](#)

Robert F. Worth

25 December 2016

The Guardian

[Saudis dropped British-made cluster bombs in Yemen, Fallon tells Commons](#)

Rowena Mason and Ewen Macaskill

20 December 2016

New York Times

[ISIS Suicide Attack Kills 48 in Southern Yemen](#)

Saeed Al-Batati

18 December 2016

Financial Times

[US reins back support for Saudi Arabia's campaign in Yemen](#)

Geoff Dyer, Mark Odell and Henry Mance

14 December 2016

New York Times

[Islamic State Gains Strength in Yemen, Challenging Al Qaeda](#)

Shuaib Almosawa, Kareem Fahim and Eric Schmitt

14 December 2016

The Guardian

[US to halt planned arms sales to Saudi Arabia over Yemen airstrikes](#)

Ewen Macaskill

13 December 2016

BBC News Online

[Yemen conflict: The view from the Saudi side](#)

Frank Gardner

9 December 2016

BBC News Online

[Yemen conflict: How bad is the humanitarian crisis?](#)

6 December 2016

The Guardian

Saudis have not breached humanitarian law in Yemen, concludes Foreign Office

Patrick Wintour

14 November 2016

Reuters

Exclusive: Iran steps up weapons supply to Yemen's Houthis via Oman - officials

Yara Bayoumy and Phil Stewart

20 October 2016

Financial Times

UN announces 72-hour ceasefire in Yemen

Simeon Kerr

18 October

BBC News Online

Yemen crisis: Who is fighting whom?

15 October 2016

Daily Telegraph

The bloody battle in Yemen shows Iran is intent on dominating the Middle East

2 September 2016

Graeme Lamb

The Independent

Thanks to UK and US intervention, al-Qaeda now has a mini-state in Yemen. It's Iraq and Isis all over again

15 April 2016

Patrick Cockburn

The Guardian

Sunni v Shia: why the conflict is more political than religious

Ian Black

5 April 2015

3. Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Minister for the Middle East comment after meeting of Quad on Yemen

19 December 2016

Tobias Ellwood calls on all parties to bring about peaceful resolution to conflict

Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood said:

“My meeting with Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, UN and the US was a clear example of the UK’s active diplomacy in trying to find a political settlement to the Yemeni conflict.

“I call on all parties to work closely with the UN Special Envoy to bring about a peaceful resolution.

“This must start with the parties committing to engage with the UN on resuming a Cessation of Hostilities, including active participation in the De-escalation and Coordination Committee to ensure that ceasefire is effective and durable.

“I also urge all parties to work to improve humanitarian and commercial access to Yemen to help alleviate humanitarian suffering.

“It was clear from today’s meeting that in Yemen there is a real desire to achieve peace. The UK will continue to play a central role in supporting that aim.”

Notes to editors:

A communiqué released after the meeting in Riyadh on Sunday 18 December 2016 is available here:

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2016/12/265752.htm>

PM: We are clear-eyed about threat from Iran

10 Downing Street

7 December 2016

Theresa May will tell the Gulf Co-operation Council the UK is committed to working with Gulf partners to counter the threat from Iran.

The Prime Minister will tell Gulf leaders in Bahrain today that she is clear-eyed about the threat Iran poses to the Gulf and the Middle East while underlining the importance of the nuclear deal struck last year.

Speaking at the Gulf Co-operation Council, the Prime Minister will say that the UK is firmly committed to our strategic partnership with the Gulf and to working with Gulf partners to counter the threat from Iran and its destabilising activities in the region.

The Prime Minister will make clear that the nuclear deal was vitally important for regional security but progress on that does not mean the UK will ignore other issues where Iranian actions continue to cause concern.

Addressing the plenary of the Gulf Co-operation Council in Manama, the Prime Minister is expected to say:

“As we address new threats to our security, so we must also continue to confront state actors whose influence fuels instability in the region. So I want to assure you that I am clear-eyed about the threat that Iran poses to the Gulf and the wider Middle East; and the UK is fully committed to our strategic partnership with the Gulf and working with you to counter that threat.

“We secured a deal which has neutralised the possibility of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons for over a decade. It has already seen Iran remove 13,000 centrifuges together with associated infrastructure and eliminate its stock of 20% enriched uranium. That was vitally important for regional security. But we must also work together to push back against Iran’s aggressive regional actions, whether in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Syria or in the Gulf itself.”

The Prime Minister will also lead the discussion on Iran in a session focussed on regional security issues following her speech.

The Prime Minister will make clear that we are under no illusions about Iran’s aggressive regional actions – highlighting Iran’s pattern of destabilising regional activity, including sending fighters including the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Qods Force to Syria to shore up the Assad regime, providing support to the Houthis in Sanaa and so working against the interests of the international community in bringing about peace and stability in Yemen, and undermining stability in Lebanon and Iraq.

The Prime Minister is expected to say that the nuclear agreement provides an opportunity to develop relations with Tehran which will allow us to engage more directly with Iran on issues of concern and that we will do so in a clear-eyed, hard-headed manner.

The Prime Minister will reiterate her commitment to working with the Gulf to push back against Iran, as the UK has done since we first escorted tankers through the Gulf in the 1980s right through to our co-operation today, whether that is supporting coalition activity in Yemen or standing up for the moderate opposition in Syria and against Assad.

Joint statement on Yemen
Foreign and Commonwealth office
16 October 2016

A joint statement from the Governments of the UK, USA, Saudi Arabia and UAE following a meeting about the situation in Yemen.

The Foreign Ministers of the U.K., U.S., the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates met in London on October 16 with UN Special Envoy for Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed. The Ministers expressed strong support for the efforts of the UN Special Envoy and his plan to present as soon as possible both parties with a roadmap that provides a clear vision of the security and political steps required to bring about a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The Ministers agreed on the urgent need to address the humanitarian crisis and end the fighting.

The Ministers called on all the Yemeni parties to work determinedly with the UN Special Envoy in accordance with the GCC initiative, the National Dialogue Outcomes, and relevant UN Security Council resolutions. All parties must demonstrate flexibility and a willingness to compromise. Unilateral steps, including those actions in Sanaa to form political institutions, are incompatible with a peaceful resolution, and will not be granted legitimacy. The Ministers expressed concern about the economic situation including the independence of the Central Bank, and called on all parties to respect and preserve the integrity of government and financial institutions.

UK welcomes initial report into airstrike on funeral hall in Yemen
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
15 October 2016

The UK welcomes the release of the initial investigation into reports of an airstrike hitting a funeral hall in Sana'a, Yemen on 8 October

The UK welcomes the release by the Coalition's Joint Investigations Assessment Team (JIAT) of the outcome of an initial investigation into reports of an airstrike hitting a funeral hall in the Yemeni capital Sana'a on 8 October. We expect further detail to be provided in a subsequent report. Our consideration of the reports will be used to contribute to our overall view on the approach and attitude of Saudi Arabia to International Humanitarian Law, as part of all the information available to us. This, in turn, informs the risk assessment made against the arms export criteria. We welcome the commitments to take action against those responsible and to review rules of engagement and compliance procedures.

Speaking following the release of the report Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood said:

“There can be no military solution to the conflict in Yemen. We urge all sides to recommit to political talks and to implement a Cessation of Hostilities. I stressed this in meetings with Yemeni and Saudi leaders, including President Hadi and Foreign Minister Al-Jubeir, in Saudi Arabia this week. We are considering the Saudi investigation report in detail.”

Notes to Editors

On 9 October the Foreign Secretary raised concerns with the Saudi Foreign Minister and Mr Ellwood spoke to the Saudi Ambassador to London to urge that the Saudi-led Coalition’s announced investigation into the incident take place as a matter of urgency. The Defence Secretary spoke to the Saudi Defence Minister on 12 October and Mr Ellwood visited Riyadh on 13 October for meetings with Yemeni President Hadi and the Saudi Foreign Minister. Discussions focused on the airstrike on a funeral hall in Sana’a and attempts to revive the stalled political process in the country.

Minister for the Middle East statement on the formation of a 'National Salvation Government' in Yemen

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

3 October 2016

Tobias Ellwood expresses concern following the Houthi and Saleh alliance's announcement of a rival government to the legitimate government of Yemen

Speaking in response to developments in Yemen, Tobias Ellwood Minister for the Middle East commented:

“I am very concerned by the continued steps being taken by the Houthi and Saleh alliance. The intention to unilaterally form a ‘Salvation Government’ is in direct defiance of the UN-facilitated peace process and undermines commitments made to finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The Yemeni parties must consult and work with the UN Special Envoy, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, in order to come to an agreement and return stability to the country.”

Notes to editors

- Yemen is now one of the most serious humanitarian crises in the world. 1/5th of the world’s total population in need of humanitarian aid live in Yemen. 7 million are facing severe food shortages. Around 2.8 million people have been affected by displacement since March 2015 and basic services have been severely affected.
- On 21st September Priti Patel announced an additional package of £37 million support to Yemen, which will bring the UK’s total humanitarian funding for the crisis to £100 million this year. The UK is the 4th largest donor to the Yemen crisis.

- The UK's key priority is to support the UN Special Envoy to Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, in facilitating a credible peace process in Yemen. Through the cross-government Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, we are providing £1.05 million (over 2 financial years) to the UN Special Envoy's office to bolster UN capacity to facilitate the peace process, and are also supporting work to broaden the dialogue to include women and other under-represented groups.

Priti Patel drives new international action to tackle the forgotten humanitarian crisis in Yemen

Department for International Development
22 September 2016

International Development Secretary announces additional support to the humanitarian crisis and pushes for new action on humanitarian efforts on the ground.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel co-hosted a high-level meeting on Yemen at the UN General Assembly (21 September) to secure urgent and concrete action on one of the worst and most forgotten humanitarian crises of our time.

The event brought together Ministers from across the world and UN bodies to agree a step change in the humanitarian effort on the ground, and to raise new financial support for critical humanitarian supplies, such as food, water, shelter and nutrition.

The UK made clear that the international community must do more to relieve humanitarian suffering in Yemen - where more than 80% of the country's population are now in need of help - before it is too late. Children are starving, millions are too poor to buy food, hospitals and schools are collapsing across the country, and disease is rife due to unclean water and poor sanitation.

The UN committed to urgently deploying senior and experienced humanitarian experts across Yemen and a new mechanism to gather feedback from Yemenis to ensure that aid is getting through effectively.

Priti Patel announced an additional package of £37 million support to Yemen, which will bring the UK's total humanitarian funding for the crisis to £100 million this year.

Priti Patel said:

"The humanitarian situation in Yemen is the forgotten crisis that demands action. 7 million people are in desperate need of food and the threat of famine remains.

"The international community must step up its response to match the seriousness of the challenges faced by people in Yemen.

“The UK has provided food, water, shelter and medical supplies for more than a million desperate people in Yemen and our new support will help even more. But the international response remains critically underfunded. I urge other countries to follow Britain’s lead and make good on their commitments – only by working together we can help stem this disaster.

“We cannot and will not stand back in silence whilst innocent people are suffering from such a lack of basic provisions such as food and clean water.”

The UK’s new funding will be channelled through the UN Pooled Fund and international NGOs, who are on the ground in Yemen and have demonstrated that they can deliver humanitarian aid effectively, even in the most difficult circumstances.

Priti Patel also announced that the recently established Education Cannot Wait Fund, of which the UK is the largest contributor, has committed \$15 million to education efforts in Yemen, as part of the global fund’s initial investments to provide education to out of school children in Yemen.

The new UK bilateral support will:

- provide over 400,000 people with access to safe water
- provide over 11,000 with food assistance
- increase families’ livelihood stability and food security by helping 9,000 own their own livestock
- help 300,000 access healthcare services
- provide nearly 18,000 households with emergency food and shelter kits
- deliver essential water and sanitation assistance to 114,200 people and
- provide emergency cash transfers to up to 105,000 vulnerable people.

UK aid is already making a difference in Yemen, helping more than 1.3 million Yemenis with food, medical supplies, water, and emergency shelter.

Donors announced more than \$400 million towards the humanitarian effort at the event. Additional concrete actions announced by UN agencies to collectively step up the international humanitarian response included better data and evidence to ensure we reach those most in need and stronger protection of civilians across the humanitarian response.

Notes to Editors

The Yemen humanitarian UNGA event was co-chaired by the UK, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O’Brien (OCHA, Under-Secretary General) and Ambassador Hesham Youssef, Assistant Secretary-General for the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

Attendees at the event included Abdel-Malek al-Mikhlafi, Yemen Foreign Minister, Jamie McGoldrick, United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator to Yemen, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah, Kuwait First Deputy Prime Minister, H.E. Reem Ibrahim Al Hashimy, UAE Minister for International Cooperation, H.E. Mr Sultan Al-Muraikhi, Qatar Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Commissioner Stylianides, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Eric Postel, USAID Associate Administrator, Peter Maurer, President ICRC, Tony Lake, Executive Director UNICEF, High Commissioner Filippo Grandi, UNHCR, Ertharin Cousin, WFP Executive Director, and Ambassador William Lacy Swing, Director General International Organisation of Migration

The international response to Yemen remains one of the most critically underfunded with the UN appeal only 39% funded (as of 19 September 2016)

The UK has been delivering life-saving aid to people inside the country and at the forefront of pushing for increased humanitarian access. It is the 4th largest donor to the Yemen crisis. The UK overall share of the UN humanitarian appeal has increased from 5% to 8%

The Yemen Humanitarian Pooled Fund is a UN-led fund which ensures that humanitarian funding is well coordinated and delivered to meet priority needs set out in the UN Humanitarian Response Plan. Supporting pooled funds enables the UN to quickly and flexibly allocate funding to urgent needs and to the organisation best placed to deliver them. This was a key humanitarian reform commitment at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS)

Education Cannot Wait is a new global fund to transform the delivery of education in emergencies - one that joins up governments, humanitarian actors and development efforts to deliver a more collaborative and rapid response to the educational needs of children and youth affected by crises. The fund aims to reach all crisis-affected children and youth with safe, free and quality education by 2030.

Communiqué on the Situation in Yemen **Foreign and Commonwealth Office** **22 September**

The Foreign Ministers of the UK, USA, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE met to reaffirm their commitment to a resolution to the conflict in Yemen.

Following on from the meetings held in London on 19 July and in Jeddah on 25 August, the Foreign Ministers of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates met in New York on 21 September 2016 to reaffirm their commitment to finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Yemen and alleviating the

humanitarian suffering of the Yemeni people. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Yemen attended the meeting and briefed on the latest developments and challenges in the peace process.

The Foreign Ministers expressed their full support for the Special Envoy and his proposed roadmap to reach a comprehensive agreement, which is based on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, UN Security Council resolutions and statements, including resolution 2216 (2015), as well as the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference. The proposed agreement, with sequenced security and political arrangements, will provide a solid foundation to bring an end to the armed conflict and foster stability for the Yemeni people. The Foreign Ministers stressed the importance of the Yemeni parties working closely with the Special Envoy and coming urgently to an agreement on this basis.

The Foreign Ministers called on the Government of Yemen, the Houthis, and elements of the General People's Congress to do everything necessary for a peaceful and orderly political transition. They rejected unilateral steps by the parties in Sana'a, including the announcement of the Supreme Political Council on 28 July, which only serve to undermine the path towards an agreement and must be avoided, and expressed concern about economic conditions in Yemen and recent developments associated with the Central Bank. The Ministers stressed the importance of the Central Bank serving the interests of all Yemenis.

The Foreign Ministers jointly called for an immediate return to a complete Cessation of Hostilities, under the Terms and Conditions which went into effect on 10 April 2016, beginning with a 72 hour ceasefire to allow the UN Special Envoy to engage in consultations with the Yemeni parties. They also called on all sides to resume working through the De-escalation and Coordination Committee to facilitate the strengthening of the Cessation of Hostilities. The Foreign Ministers expressed particular concern about and called for an immediate halt to all cross-border attacks on Saudi Arabian territory, including ballistic missiles.

To avoid further humanitarian suffering and economic deterioration, the Foreign Ministers further called on all parties to allow safe, rapid and unhindered access for humanitarian supplies to all affected governorates, including Taiz, and to facilitate access for essential imports of food, fuel and medical supplies into the country and their distribution throughout.

The Foreign Ministers concluded by stating the need for the Yemeni parties to demonstrate good faith, flexibility and a spirit of compromise in order to bring peace to Yemen.

4. Letters from the International Development Committee

Letters and responses from the International Development committee to Boris Johnson

[UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia](#), 14 December 2016

[Yemen and the UN Human Rights Council](#), 21 September 2016

[Response](#), 14 October 2016

[Corrections to Parliamentary Questions and Westminster Hall debates on the subject of allegations of breaches of IHL in Yemen by the Saudi-led coalition](#), 25 July 2016

[Response](#), 12 August 2016

5. PQs

Saudi Arabia: Arms Trade

23 Dec 2016 | HL4113

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the decision by the government of the United States not to proceed with a number of munitions sales to Saudi Arabia, whether they intend to cancel planned weapons sales; what is the value of UK sales of arms to Saudi Arabia which have been licensed since March; and whether they have sought legal advice about potential UK complicity in war crimes as a consequence of armaments originating in the UK being used by Saudi Arabia against civilians in that country and elsewhere.

Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

As the Secretary of State for Defence, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Sevenoaks (Michael Fallon) said in his statement on Monday 19 December, we operate one of the most robust arms export control regimes in the world – we have our own robust evidence-based process and reach our own conclusions.

The UK takes our arms export responsibilities very seriously. The key test for our continued arms exports to Saudi Arabia is whether there is a clear risk that the items concerned might be used in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law. The situation is kept under careful and continual review.

The US continues to export a wide range of military equipment to Saudi Arabia, including combat aircraft and attack helicopters and munitions. In response to concerns over certain elements of the conflict in Yemen, the US announced a single upcoming munitions sale would not be taken forward. We are in contact with US authorities on this issue.

Statistics on licences for the export of strategic goods are published on a quarterly basis. The most recent published figures cover March – June 2016. In this period the value of standard individual export licences which were granted for military goods to Saudi Arabia was worth £6,235,378.

Yemen: Military Intervention

16 Dec 2016 | 56583

Asked by: Keith Vaz

To ask the Prime Minister, what discussions she has had with King Salman on her visit to the Gulf in December 2016 on the situation in Yemen; and if she will make a statement.

Answering member: Theresa May | Prime Minister

I discussed a range of issues with King Salman related to the Gulf Region. The UK Government has been clear that we want to see a

durable ceasefire and the resumption of peace talks because a political solution is the best way to bring long-term stability to Yemen.

Global Trade

15 Dec 2016 | 618 cc947-8

Asked by: Barry Gardiner

One of the steps that the Government are taking to expand UK trade is through arms sales, particularly to the middle east. In July, the Committees on Arms Export Controls heard evidence that there was an imbalance in arms sales, with promotion coming at the expense of regulation

“such that in UK practice those things are at odds.”

Does the Secretary of State recognise that imbalance? If he does, what does he propose to do about it? If he does not, has he chastised the White House for the remarks this week that “systemic, endemic” problems in Saudi

Arabia’s targeting of civilians in Yemen drove the US decision to halt a future weapons sale, which has the Secretary of State and British policy in this area looking callous and threadbare?

Answered by: Dr Fox | International Trade

I thank the hon. Gentleman; this is the first time in my life that I have been grateful for being colour blind. [Laughter.] This country has one of the world’s strictest arms control regimes. It is both robust and transparent, and decisions are scrutinised intensely. I simply do not accept the picture that he paints of the UK’s attitude.

Engagements

14 Dec 2016 | 618 c787

Asked by: Angus Robertson

The US Government have just said that “systematic, endemic problems in Saudi Arabia’s targeting drove the US decision to halt a future weapons sale involving precision-guided munitions”. The Saudis have UK-supplied precision-guided Paveway IV missiles—they are made in Scotland. The UK has licensed £3.3 billion-worth of arms to Saudi Arabia since the beginning of the bombing campaign. What will it take for the UK to adopt an ethical foreign policy when it comes to Yemen?

Answered by: Theresa May | Prime Minister

As the right hon. Gentleman knows, the intervention in Yemen is a UN-backed intervention. As I have said previously, where there are allegations of breaches of international humanitarian law, we require those to be properly investigated. We do have a relationship with Saudi Arabia. The security of the Gulf is important to us, and I would simply also remind him that Saudi intelligence—the counter-terrorism links we have with Saudi Arabia and the intelligence we get from Saudi Arabia—has saved potentially hundreds of lives here in the UK.

Engagements

14 Dec 2016 | 618 cc786-7

Asked by: Angus Robertson

We join the leader of the Labour party and the Prime Minister in wishing great success to the Jo Cox single, which is available for download on Friday—I am sure we are all going to download it.

Civilians have suffered grievously from the bombing of hospitals, schools and markets. The United Nations believes that 60% of civilian casualties are caused by airstrikes. In the past 24 hours, the United States has stopped the supply of precision-guided munitions to Saudi Arabia to bomb Yemen. When will the UK follow suit?

Answered by: Theresa May | Prime Minister

As the right hon. Gentleman knows, we have a very strict regime of export licences in relation to weapons here in the United Kingdom. We exercise that very carefully, and in recent years we have indeed refused export licences in relation to arms, including to Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

Yemen: Malnutrition

14 Dec 2016 | 56436

Asked by: Edward Argar

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what estimate her Department has made of the number of Yemenis who are at risk of malnutrition; and what proportion of those people are children.

Answering member: Rory Stewart | Department for International Development

According to the recently published [UN Humanitarian Needs Overview for Yemen](#), almost 4.5 million people are at risk of malnutrition or require treatment or prevention services for malnutrition. Of that number, almost half a million children under 5 suffer from severe acute malnutrition, and 2.8 million children and pregnant or lactating women are affected by moderate acute malnutrition.

The UK is providing £19 million to UNICEF this year to treat children with severe acute malnutrition and support mobile health clinics. Last year, we helped treat over 150,000 children under 5 for severe acute malnutrition.

Yemen: Diesel Fuel

14 Dec 2016 | 56435

Asked by: Edward Argar

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment her Department has made of the availability within Yemen of diesel oil for the (a) generation of electricity and (b) functioning of water pumps used as wells.

Answering member: Rory Stewart | Department for International Development

In October 2016, the World Food Programme reported that 39% of Yemen's estimated fuel needs (including for diesel oil) were imported into Yemen. Although we do not have precise figures, this is likely to have affected the availability of diesel for the generation of electricity and functioning of water pumps as Yemen is dependent on imports for the majority of its fuel needs.

The Department of International Development is providing £1.42 million to the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) to speed up the clearance process for shipments of essential fuel and food to Yemen.

Topical Questions

12 Dec 2016 | 618 c499

Asked by: Chris Bryant

Thanks to the Cluster Munitions (Prohibitions) Act 2010, brought in by the Labour Government, we do not use or sell cluster munitions any more, but the Government are also required under the Act to persuade their allies not to use cluster munitions either. What are the Government doing to try to stop the Saudis from using cluster munitions in Yemen?

Answered by: Harriett Baldwin | Ministry of Defence

In line with our obligations under the cluster munitions convention, we continue actively to discourage all states that are not party to the convention from using cluster munitions and we encourage them to accede to it without delay. We have raised the issue of ratification of the convention at ministerial level with Saudi Arabia.

Yemen: Humanitarian Aid

28 Nov 2016 | HL3219

Asked by: Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of reports by the World Food Programme and other aid agencies that millions of Yemenis are dependent on aid and half the population faces starvation, what plans they have to support the removal of the Saudi Arabian blockade of Yemen.

Answering member: Lord Bates | Department for International Development

There is no blockade in Yemen, although measures are in place to prevent the flow of arms into Yemen in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2216. The Government continues to lobby all parties to facilitate rapid, safe and unhindered commercial and humanitarian access.

DFID is funding the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) to speed up the clearance process for shipments of essential food and fuel to Yemen. We are also funding the World Food Programme and

the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to deliver food and treat severe malnutrition. In 2015/16, UK aid provided food aid, cash and vouchers to over 700,000 Yemenis.

Yemen: Military Intervention

28 Nov 2016 | 54392

Asked by: Tom Brake

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if the Government will make an assessment of the implications for his Department's policies of the Human Rights Watch's findings on the proportionality of the 8 October 2016 airstrike on a funeral in Sanaa by the Saudi-led Coalition.

Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Saudi Arabia has publicly stated that it is investigating reports of alleged violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and that any lessons learned will be acted upon. It is for every party to a conflict to assess the concrete military advantage it is seeking to achieve against other factors, which include any incidental harm to civilians or damage to civilian objects, which would be excessive in relation to that military advantage

The UK welcomes the release by the Coalition's Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT) of the outcome of an initial investigation into reports of an airstrike hitting a funeral hall in the Yemeni capital Sana'a on 8 October. Our consideration of the reports will be used to contribute to our overall view on the approach and attitude of Saudi Arabia to IHL, as part of all the information available to us. This, in turn, informs the risk assessment made against the Consolidated Criteria.

We continue to monitor the situation closely, seeking further information where appropriate. We welcome any further information Non-Government Organisations can provide.

Yemen: Military Intervention

25 Nov 2016 | 53516

Asked by: Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the role is of UK military liaison officers with responsibility for liaison with the Saudi Arabian military; and what role those military liaison officers have in the selection of targets relating to operations in Yemen.

Answering member: Sir Michael Fallon | Ministry of Defence

We have deployed a small number of military personnel as liaison officers in Saudi Headquarters to provide the UK with greater insight into Saudi processes and operations.

These liaison officers are not involved in carrying out strikes, directing or conducting operations in Yemen or selecting targets, and are not involved in Saudi target decision-making.

All UK Service personnel remain under UK command and control.

Yemen: Military Intervention

24 Nov 2016 | 53760

Asked by: Keith Vaz

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what UK representation was involved in John Kerry's negotiations on the conflict in Yemen during his visit to Oman on 14 November 2016.

Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

I spoke to John Kerry on 20 October to discuss his visit and next steps in political negotiations. The UK continues to work with key partners to support the work of UN Special Envoy, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, and his tireless efforts in working with all parties to bring about peace in Yemen.

Yemen: Military Intervention

24 Nov 2016 | 53758

Asked by: Keith Vaz

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to parties involved in the conflict in Yemen on the safety and kidnapping of journalists.

Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) requires parties to conflict to respect and protect civilians. The unanimous adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 2222 on the protection of journalists in May 2015 provided recognition, not only of the contribution that journalists make through the unique role they play, but also in the increased dangers they face as a consequence of working in challenging situations. We continue to raise the importance of respect for human rights law with all parties and we have been clear with all parties that they should act in accordance with IHL.

Topical Questions

22 Nov 2016 | 617 cc749-878

Asked by: Margaret Ferrier

The Prime Minister will attend the Gulf Cooperation Council leaders' summit next month as a guest of honour. Does she intend to use the opportunity to push for greater information-sharing with the UK from Saudi-led coalition operations in Yemen so that UK defence personnel are able to form a complete understanding of the coalition's regard for international humanitarian law?

Answered by: Boris Johnson | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We are very honoured that our Prime Minister is the first female Prime Minister to be invited to attend the GCC in the Gulf. It emphasises the

very strong relations that we have with that area. This Government are doing everything they can to satisfy themselves of the compliance of Gulf countries, notably of Saudi Arabia, with the principles of international humanitarian law.

Topical Questions

16 Nov 2016 | 617 c226

Asked by: Amanda Milling

Will my right hon. Friend outline what humanitarian relief the Government are providing to support those affected by the conflict in Yemen?

Answered by: Priti Patel | International Development

My hon. Friend is absolutely right to raise the appalling scenarios we are seeing in Yemen right now. There is a deteriorating situation and a humanitarian crisis, with an increasing number of Yemenis facing food shortages and suffering malnutrition. There has been a recent outbreak of cholera as well. The UK is the fourth largest donor, and has committed to spending £109 million in Yemen, helping more than 1.3 million Yemenis—[Interruption.]

Yemen

07 Nov 2016 | 616 c1241

Asked by: Keith Vaz

Last Monday, the Security Council discussed Yemen for the first time in six months. I observed the proceedings. There was unanimous support for an immediate ceasefire and the four-point plan put forward by Matthew Rycroft, our ambassador. Will the Minister speak to the Foreign Secretary in person or through the Defence Secretary to ensure that a new resolution is tabled as soon as possible so that it can be discussed and passed, and the humanitarian and military crisis can be dealt with?

Answered by: Harriett Baldwin | Ministry of Defence

The right hon. Gentleman, who pays such close interest to this subject, will be aware that the UK continues strongly to support the work of the UN special envoy, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, and we strongly support a political solution. I will certainly pass on the sentiments he has just expressed to colleagues in the Foreign Office.

Yemen

07 Nov 2016 | 616 c1240

Asked by: Kevin Foster

I am sure the Minister will agree that in this situation we have to be careful what we wish for, given the alternatives. Will she outline what support the UK Government are giving to the parties involved to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law?

Answered by: Harriett Baldwin | Ministry of Defence

My hon. Friend is right to say that in this situation the UK particularly supports a political solution. We believe that this is the best way to bring long-term stability to Yemen and to end the conflict. With respect to ongoing support, the UK backed UN resolution 2216, as my hon. Friend knows, and we have an ongoing defence engagement relationship with the Saudi Arabian Government.

Yemen**07 Nov 2016 | 616 c1240****Asked by: Dr Philippa Whitford**

The UK continues to supply arms to Saudi Arabia, despite repeated bombing of civilian targets and non-governmental organisation hospitals in Yemen. The most conservative figures from the United Nations Human Rights Council demonstrate that there have been at least 10,000 casualties and 4,000 confirmed dead in a country facing humanitarian disaster. Will the Minister and the Secretary of State heed the previous call by the Business, Innovation and Skills and the International Development Committees to end export licences for these arms, or are these casualties just considered a fair price to pay?

Answered by: Harriett Baldwin | Ministry of Defence

We will be responding to those reports imminently, but I want to put on record that we have one of the most robust arms export control regimes in the world. We are aware of the alleged violations that the hon. Lady mentions and we take alleged violations in this conflict extremely seriously.

Yemen**07 Nov 2016 | 616 cc1240-1****Asked by: Dr Philippa Whitford**

What recent support the armed forces have provided to the military campaign of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.

Answered by: Harriett Baldwin | Ministry of Defence

The UK is not a member of the Saudi Arabian-led coalition. British armed forces personnel are therefore not involved in selecting targets, carrying out strikes, or directing or conducting operations in Yemen.

Yemen: Military Intervention**04 Nov 2016 | 51256****Asked by: Emily Thornberry**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the Government has made a request to participate in the Joint Incident Assessment Team investigation into the Sana's funeral hall attack in Yemen on 8 October 2016; and how many requests in total the Government has made to participate in such investigations.

Answering member: Boris Johnson | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK has supported the development of the coalition Joint Incident Assessment Team (JIAT) and delivered two training sessions in Saudi Arabia on the process for investigating alleged international humanitarian law (IHL) violations. The UK has not been directly involved in investigations undertaken by the JIAT.

We welcomed the Cessation of Hostilities from 19 - 22 October. It is critical that all parties to the conflict renew their commitment to the Cessation of Hostilities for the sake of the people of Yemen. All parties must engage constructively with the De-escalation and Coordination Committee so that when incidents of concern are raised they can be addressed effectively to reduce the likelihood of escalation.

Yemen: Military Intervention
04 Nov 2016 | 51230

Asked by: Emily Thornberry

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, on what basis the prison complex within the Red Sea port of Hodeida was attacked by the Saudi-led coalition forces in Yemen on 29 October 2016; and when he expects to receive the report of the Joint Incident Assessment Team into that incident.

Answering member: Boris Johnson | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We are aware of reports of an alleged airstrike on the prison complex within Hodeida on 29 October. It is important that the Saudi-led Coalition conducts thorough and conclusive investigations into incidents where it is alleged that international humanitarian law (IHL) has been breached. We regularly raise the importance of compliance with IHL with the Saudi Arabian Government and other members of the military Coalition.

We welcomed the Cessation of Hostilities from 19 - 22 October. It is critical that all parties to the conflict renew their commitment to the Cessation of Hostilities for the sake of the people of Yemen. All parties must engage constructively with the De-escalation and Coordination Committee so that when incidents of concern are raised they can be addressed effectively to reduce the likelihood of escalation.

Yemen: Military Intervention
04 Nov 2016 | 51229

Asked by: Emily Thornberry

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, on what basis the home of Abdullah Adbo in the Al-Salw district of Taiz, and adjacent homes, were attacked by the Saudi-led coalition forces in Yemen on 28 or 29 October 2016; and when he expects to receive the report of the Joint Incident Assessment Team into that incident.

Answering member: Boris Johnson | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We are aware of reports of an alleged airstrike on the district of Taiz on 29 October. It is important that the Saudi-led Coalition conducts thorough and conclusive investigations into incidents where it is alleged that international humanitarian law (IHL) has been breached. We regularly raise the importance of compliance with IHL with the Saudi Arabian Government and other members of the military Coalition. We welcomed the Cessation of Hostilities from 19 - 22 October. It is critical that all parties to the conflict renew their commitment to the Cessation of Hostilities for the sake of the people of Yemen. All parties must engage constructively with the De-escalation and Coordination Committee so that when incidents of concern are raised they can be addressed effectively to reduce the likelihood of escalation.

Yemen: Armed Conflict
02 Nov 2016 | 50377**Asked by: Flick Drummond**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the observation and effectiveness of the recent ceasefire in Yemen.

Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We welcomed the Cessation of Hostilities from 19-22 October. It is critical that all parties to the conflict renew their commitment to a Cessation of Hostilities for the sake of the people of Yemen. All parties must engage constructively with the De-escalation and Coordination Committee so that when incidents of concern are raised they can be addressed effectively to reduce the likelihood of escalation.

Yemen: Diplomatic Service
01 Nov 2016 | 50701**Asked by: Sue Hayman**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many UK diplomats have visited Yemen in each of the last 10 years.

Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Until February 2015, British diplomats were based in the British Embassy in Sana'a, Yemen. However, the escalating conflict at the beginning of 2015 led to the temporary closure and suspension of operations at the Embassy. It is currently too dangerous for UK staff to be based in Yemen.

6. Other parliamentary material

6.1 Oral Statement

Statement on the conflict in Yemen [Extract]

19 Dec 2016 | 618 cc1214-1226

The Secretary of State for Defence (Sir Michael Fallon): With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to update the House on an announcement that was made in Riyadh earlier today on the conflict in Yemen. In 2014, Houthi forces and those loyal to former President Saleh took over the capital, Sana'a, and forced out the Hadi Government. Houthi forces have subsequently attacked Saudi territory, shelling border villages daily and killing Saudi civilians. A 10-country Saudi-led coalition intervened to restore the Hadi Government, to deter further Houthi aggression and to defend the Saudi border. United Nations Security Council resolution 2216 condemned the Houthis' actions. The United Kingdom fully supports both the coalition and the right of Saudi Arabia to defend itself. Instability in Yemen, where there is a long-standing al-Qaeda presence and a growing threat from Daesh—seen tragically in Aden this weekend—threatens not just the Gulf but our security in western Europe.

Concerns have been raised in this House and by non-governmental organisations about our export of military equipment to Saudi Arabia and elsewhere in the Gulf. There have been allegations about breaches of international humanitarian law. As we operate one of the strictest arms export control regimes in the world, we take any such allegations very seriously and do our best to ensure that they are properly investigated by the coalition.

Following the air strike on the Great Hall in Sana'a on 26 October this year, for example, I spoke to the Saudi Defence Minister, the Foreign Secretary spoke to his counterpart, and the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood), travelled to Riyadh to underline our concerns in person. The coalition's joint incidents assessment team—the JIAT—subsequently announced interim findings within a week. The coalition committed to review its rules of engagement and its command and control systems, and to take action against those held responsible. We acknowledge the progress they have made and look forward to the completed investigation of that incident.

The coalition continues to investigate other allegations. The findings of eight investigations were announced on 4 August and a further five on 6 December. We are pressing the coalition to complete all the remaining investigations as quickly as possible.

One specific allegation that UK-supplied cluster munitions were used in January this year was raised in this House on 24 May. The UK signed the convention on cluster munitions in 2008 and has not supplied any such weapons to Saudi Arabia since 1989—over a quarter of a century ago. Our initial view, as set out by the then Minister of State for Defence Procurement, the hon. Member for Ludlow (Mr Dunne), and based on

the information we held at the time, was that a UK weapon had not been used, but we committed to analyse the allegation and to seek a full investigation by the coalition.

That investigation has now concluded. The coalition confirmed earlier today that a limited number of BL755 cluster munitions that were exported from the UK in the 1980s were dropped in Yemen, including by a coalition aircraft in the incident alleged by Amnesty International not far from the Saudi border. The coalition, whose members are not parties to the convention, has said that the munitions were used against a legitimate military target and did not therefore contravene international humanitarian law. However, Saudi Arabia has now confirmed that it will not further use BL755 cluster munitions. I welcome that.

This particular instance shows that, in complete contrast to Russian and Syrian air strikes, where allegations are made, and with our support, the Saudi-led coalition is prepared to investigate thoroughly, to publish the findings and to take action where appropriate. I assure the House that we will continue to keep current sales of military equipment to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf allies under review, in accordance with our arms export criteria. I commend this statement to the House.

Wayne David: I thank the Secretary of State for his statement and for advance sight of it. We are all deeply concerned about the ongoing conflict in Yemen and the dire humanitarian situation it has caused. As the House is aware, there have been widespread allegations that both sides in the conflict have violated international law. The latest revelation that UK-made cluster munitions have been used by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen is deeply worrying. Not only are such weapons immediately dangerous, but they come with a toxic legacy, lying on battlefields and threatening civilians, especially children, long after a conflict has ended.

In 2008, the previous Labour Government signed the convention on cluster munitions. The strikes that the Secretary of State has described today amount to the first confirmed use of UK-made cluster bombs since that date. Will the Secretary of State tell the House when he was first made aware of the possible use of such weapons by the coalition in Yemen? Why has it taken so long to confirm that those weapons were used?

A few days ago, the Obama Administration blocked the sale of guided-munitions kits over concerns about civilian casualties. That followed the United States blocking a sale of cluster munitions to Saudi Arabia. The Foreign Secretary said that the test for continued British arms sales "is whether those weapons might be used in a commission of a serious breach of international humanitarian law."

I note that the Defence Secretary confirmed that a limited number of cluster munitions supplied by this country were dropped in Yemen by a coalition aircraft. Although the cluster munitions were exported in the 1980s, will the Government commit to examining whether their current policy needs to be changed? There have been wholly unacceptable actions, and this country cannot sit on its hands.

The Government have consistently rejected calls for an independent, United Nations-led investigation into possible breaches of humanitarian and international law in Yemen. In the light of what we have learnt today, I implore the Government to heed calls from Opposition Members, as well as from the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee, the Foreign Affairs Committee and the International Development Committee, to have an inquiry. We need such an inquiry so that we can have independent verification of the actions of both sides in this conflict.

Finally, on the humanitarian situation, will the Secretary of State set out what action is being taken to help the 14 million people in need of urgent food and the 13 million Yemenis who lack access to clean water? In particular, we would like to know what is being done to help those children who are suffering so desperately in this conflict.

Sir Michael Fallon: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for that. We all want to see this conflict brought to an end, and I hope we would be even-handed about that; more than 90 Saudi civilians have lost their lives in this conflict, through shelling over the border into Saudi Arabia, and more than 500, including women and children, have been injured. It is important that those things are set alongside other allegations of civilian casualties in Yemen itself.

The hon. Gentleman asked when we first became aware of this allegation. We were made aware of it in the spring. It was brought to the Floor of this House in May, and our analysis began. I wrote back to Amnesty at the end of June telling it that we had commenced work on our own analysis, but that could take us only so far, as the investigation itself was a matter for the Saudi authorities. That investigation continued throughout the autumn and has concluded only in the past few days. We, too, have been frustrated by the length of time it has taken, but the investigation has been carried out by the Saudis and it has now got us to the transparent admission that has been made this morning.

The hon. Gentleman asked me about the United States stopping the supply of munitions, and we should be careful here; the US has stopped only one munitions licence, and it continues to supply combat aircraft, attack helicopters and other munitions to Saudi Arabia. Only one licence has been paused. As he has described, we have a different process—an arms control process that we keep under continuous review. He asked what our current policy on cluster munitions weapons is. It is exactly the same as it was left under the Labour Government: we oppose the use of cluster munitions. Let me make it very clear to the House that we are signatories of and parties to that convention, and we oppose the use of cluster munitions. We have made that very clear to the Saudi authorities and we therefore welcome their announcement today that they will no longer use cluster munitions. That is a result from this investigation and the pressure we have been putting on them.

Finally, the hon. Gentleman asked me about an independent inquiry. We have been clear throughout that an allegation such as this is, first, a matter for the Saudi authorities and the coalition authorities to investigate. They have shown through this process that they are able to

do that. They have investigated, and they have today announced the findings and taken action as a result.

Dr Julian Lewis: Have the Saudis explained why they used these British-supplied weapons, presumably in the knowledge that it would cause considerable embarrassment to the British Government? What plans do the Saudis have to dispose of their remaining stocks?

Sir Michael Fallon: The Saudis have made it clear that they used these munitions in a border area—just a few kilometres from the Saudi border—inside Yemen and they used them against a legitimate military target that may have been responsible for some of the attacks and deaths they had been suffering on their side of the border. They therefore state that, as they are not party to the convention, the use of these cluster munitions does not contravene international law. As for stocks, they have made it clear that they are not going to use UK-supplied cluster munitions in future, and we should all welcome that.

Brendan O’Hara: Scottish National party Members have been clear for many, many months that there have been undeniable violations of international humanitarian law by Saudi Arabia in its conflict in Yemen. There is overwhelming evidence that the Saudis have been failing to conduct military operations lawfully, a situation that caused the US to join the Netherlands and Germany in suspending arms sales to Saudi Arabia very recently. Once again, the Saudi regime stands accused of routinely using cluster bombs against the Yemeni people; that is a weapon even this Government describe as “unjustifiable” because it is designed to kill and injure civilians. Today’s revelations are not particularly new, but unless the Government act immediately to end arms sales to Saudi Arabia the court of public opinion will find them guilty of collusion in violations of international humanitarian law.

I have a couple of questions: will the Secretary of State tell the House when he first saw the analysis confirming the UK cluster bomb? Is *The Guardian* article today correct in saying that he first saw it a month ago? If so, why is this House finding out only now, after it appeared in the press? His statement says that the cluster bombs were used against legitimate military targets and therefore did not contravene international humanitarian law, but how can we continue to do business with a regime that routinely uses cluster bombs against civilian populations? This country is a signatory to the treaty, which obliges us to stop other people using such munitions. Finally, what does a regime have to do—how many breaches of international humanitarian law must it commit?—before this Government deem it an unacceptable partner to deal in arms with?

Sir Michael Fallon: First, I am not sure that the hon. Gentleman was listening, as the United States has not suspended arms sales to Saudi Arabia—he is incorrect about that. The US has suspended one sale of munitions, but it continues to sell munitions generally to Saudi Arabia, and to supply aircraft and attack helicopters. Secondly, there is no evidence that cluster munitions have been routinely used in Yemen—on the contrary, this allegation stood out for what it is. It has been thoroughly investigated and, as a result of that investigation and of our pressure, we now have an undertaking that Saudi Arabia will not use

cluster munitions of this kind in the future and indeed that it is now considering becoming a party to the convention.

The hon. Gentleman asked when I first became aware of the analysis that we were doing. My hon. Friend the then Minister for Defence Procurement told the House in May that we would look hard at this allegation, and we began our analysis, but of course we were not investigating this allegation; only the coalition could investigate it, because only the coalition had access to all the information that would be needed to see whether this particular allegation was justified. I concede that the investigation has taken a long time, but we now have the result, and we have the admission from the Saudi authorities that cluster munitions were used, together with the undertaking that they will not be used in future.

[...]

6.2 Written Statements

Ministerial correction

16 Nov 2016 | Boris Johnson | HCWS259

My speech on the Opposition motion on the conflict and humanitarian situation in Yemen on 26 October contained two inaccuracies which I wish to correct.

I stated that “President Hadi had formally requested military action to restore his Government, while the Arab League and the Gulf Co-operation Council had both called for “all means and measures to protect Yemen and deter Houthi aggression”.” I should have said that President Hadi had formally requested action, as noted in UN Security Council 2216 (2015), “from the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf and the League of Arab States to immediately provide support, by all necessary means and measures, including military intervention, to protect Yemen and its people from the continuing aggression by the Houthis”.

I also stated that “last month my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development hosted an event in New York that raised \$100 million for the people of Yemen, on top of the £100 million contributed by the people of this country.” I should have said that in September my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development hosted an event in New York that raised \$100 million for the people of Yemen, which included an additional package from the UK of £37 million of support to Yemen, bringing the total humanitarian funding for the crisis this year to £100 million contributed by the people of this country.

Yemen Update

05 Sep 2016 | Boris Johnson | HCWS128

This government continues to believe that the best way to achieve stability in Yemen is through a political solution. The UK's priority is to support the UN Special Envoy to Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, in facilitating a credible peace process in Yemen. I deeply regret the failure of the parties to reach an agreement at the UN-led peace talks in Kuwait, and I continue to urge them to find the compromises that will end the current conflict.

There has been a sustained international effort in support of the UN throughout and the UK continues to play an active role. In July I hosted a meeting in London to discuss Yemen with the Foreign Ministers of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the US Secretary of State where we collectively reiterated our strong support for the role of the UN in mediating a lasting political solution to the crisis. We affirmed that a successful resolution should include arrangements that would require the withdrawal of armed groups from the capital and other areas, and a political agreement that would allow for the resumption of a peaceful, inclusive political transition. In August, Minister for the Middle East, Tobias Ellwood, represented me in Saudi Arabia for talks with the US Secretary of State, GCC Foreign Ministers and the UN Special Envoy. The discussions focused on finding a way to end the political deadlock in Yemen, humanitarian assistance and ways to support Yemen's precarious economy.

We will continue to support the peace process through our diplomatic efforts. The UK will host a discussion on Yemen at the UN General Assembly later this month with key international partners. In parallel, we continue to press for military restraint on all sides and call for a renewed commitment to a Cessation of Hostilities.

We are aware of reports of alleged violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) by parties to the conflict and take these very seriously. We regularly raise the importance of compliance with IHL with the Saudi Arabian Government and other members of the Saudi-Arabian led military Coalition. I raised the issue of IHL compliance with my Saudi counterpart, Foreign Minister Al Jubeir on 22 August. It is important that the Saudi Arabian-led Coalition in the first instance conducts thorough and conclusive investigations into incidents where it is alleged that IHL has been violated. They have the best insight into their own military procedures and will be able to conduct the most thorough and conclusive investigations. It will also allow the Coalition forces to understand what went wrong and apply the lessons learnt in the best possible way. This is the standard we set ourselves and our allies.

In this respect, Saudi Arabia announced more detail of how incidents of concern involving Coalition forces are investigated on 31 January. The Saudi Arabian-led Coalition Joint Investigations Assessment Team publically announced the outcome of eight investigations on 4 August.

The UK Government takes its arms export responsibilities very seriously and operates one of the most robust arms export control regimes in the world. All export licence applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, taking account of all relevant factors at the time of the application. The key test for our continued arms exports to Saudi Arabia in relation to IHL is whether there is a clear risk that those weapons might be used in a commission of a serious violation of IHL. Having regard to all the information available to us, we assess that this test has not been met.

6.3 Urgent Question

Urgent question: Yemen [Extract]
12 Dec 2016 | 618 cc515-525

Asked by: Keith Vaz

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement to clarify the United Kingdom's policy on the conflict in Yemen.

Answered by: Tobias Ellwood | Foreign and Commonwealth office

As the Foreign Secretary made clear during his trip to the region this weekend, Britain supports the Saudi-led campaign to restore the legitimate Government in Yemen. Ultimately, a political solution is the best way to bring long-term stability to Yemen and end the conflict.

We continue to have deep concern for the suffering of the people of Yemen, which is why making progress on peace talks is the top priority. As with all negotiations of this kind, they will not be quick or indeed easy, and a lot of tough discussions will need to be had. The United Nations has drawn up a road map for ending the conflict, which outlines the security and political steps the parties must take. The UK is playing a central role in this process.

The Foreign Secretary hosted the last meeting of the Quad, comprising Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, the United States and the United Kingdom, which UN Special Envoy Ismail Ahmed attended, in London on 16 October. In addition, I travelled to Riyadh on 20 November to discuss the road map with President Hadi and to seek ways to find a political solution to the conflict. Most recently, the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary raised the issue of Yemen during their visits to the region, and I met Vice-President General Ali Mohsen on Saturday during the Manama dialogue.

As the House will be aware, Yemen is one of the most serious humanitarian crises in the world. So, in addition to our considerable diplomatic efforts to try and bring an end to the conflict, the UK is the fourth largest donor to Yemen, committing £100 million to Yemen for 2016-17. UK aid is already making a difference there; last year we

helped more than 1.3 million Yemenis with food, medical supplies, water and emergency shelter.

The situation in Yemen is indeed grave, which is why we are debating this matter today. There are now plans for the Quad to meet in the very near future, so that we can move this very important process forward.

Keith Vaz: I am grateful to you for granting this urgent question, Mr Speaker, and to the Minister for his answer.

Until now, our foreign policy objectives in Yemen have been crystal clear: pursuing a cessation of hostilities and backing a UN mandated intervention. Last week, the Foreign Secretary was absolutely right to speak of his profound concern for the Yemeni people and correct to say that this conflict could not be solved by force alone. However, his words also revealed an inconsistency in our foreign policy, which if not addressed immediately, threatens to wreck everything that we are trying to accomplish.

Will the Minister please confirm that we would never be involved in any puppeteering or proxy wars anywhere in the world, including in Yemen? Our influence and credibility as an honest broker is now being seriously questioned. We criticised Russia's bombing of Aleppo; the Russians accuse us of supporting the same thing in Yemen.

Further to the Minister's reply, can he clarify that our objective is an immediate ceasefire, and can he lay out the detail of how we will get to that position? As the Foreign Secretary has said, we hold the pens on Yemen at the United Nations. There is already a draft Security Council resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire, resumption of peace talks and humanitarian access. Where is that resolution now? Will it be tabled before the Security Council before the end of the year? We must not fiddle as Yemen burns. On Saturday, Islamic State bombed a military camp in Aden, killing 35 soldiers. The UN humanitarian co-ordinator, Stephen O'Brien, calls Yemen a "man-made brutal humanitarian disaster", with four fifths of the population in desperate need of emergency aid.

On Wednesday, the House, including the Minister, will show its support for the incredible work of the humanitarian agencies at "Yemen Day". Today, the Disasters Emergency Committee announced a long overdue emergency appeal, but if the fighting does not stop that will not be enough. The Government must speak with one voice and with one aim for Yemen, and that should be an immediate ceasefire. Anything else only plays into the hands of terrorist organisations, damages our diplomacy and increases the suffering of the Yemeni people.

Tobias Ellwood: I pay tribute to the right hon. Gentleman for his continuing work and interest in Yemen and for bringing it to the attention of the House. I can confirm that we remain resolute in working toward a cessation of hostilities, developing confidence-building measures, working with the United Nations and supporting the UN envoy. I absolutely agree that we will not win by military means alone; we need a long-term political solution for a country that, as he knows, has been fragmented since its beginning.

The right hon. Gentleman is right that as well as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, we are the UN penholder and therefore take a lead on these matters. Humanitarian access is vital. I made it clear that we are investing more funds to support the UN agencies and others. The UN Security Council resolution is being discussed in New York as we speak, and as I mentioned, the Quad meeting that will take these matters further takes place in the very near future.

The right hon. Gentleman touched on a comparison between Yemen and Syria. President Hadi and the coalition that has been created to support him has the backing of the United Nations through resolution 2216, so there is a legitimate call to support President Hadi and the work he has done. Without that, the Houthi advance would have pushed much further, through the capital and down to the port of Aden, and we would have had a full-scale civil war. In contrast, there is no UN resolution to support Russia's involvement in Syria. The Russians are supporting a brutal regime, which has used chemical weapons and barrel bombs against its own people; they have compounded the situation. The two are not comparable in any way.

Britain remains resolute in its support for President Hadi and for the United Nations and its envoy in bringing the necessary stakeholders back to the table. I hope that we will see some developments in the very near future.

Crispin Blunt: Given that I have only just come down from the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy, I thank you for calling me, Mr Speaker.

May I ask my hon. Friend the Minister not only to work hard to get the macro-deal on a ceasefire between the competing parties at the top level, but to make sure that the work of all the international agencies is engaged with all the subsidiary interests in Yemen—a nation of enormous complexity? We must not just get a political track at the top level and ignore all the consequences that may flow regionally and more locally in Yemen.

Tobias Ellwood: My hon. Friend is right to point to the complexities of Yemen and what is going on there. On the face of it, the Houthis are against President Hadi, but as those who have visited or are familiar with the country will know, there is a complex network of tribal loyalties which are not necessarily supportive of any circumstance at the time, and those loyalties move depending on movements of funds, weapons, interests and so forth. It is a very complicated situation.

The right hon. Member for Leicester East (Keith Vaz), who raised the urgent question, spoke of the attack at the weekend. Reports suggest Daesh was responsible for it, although we still await confirmation. That shows how al-Qaeda, which is firmly based in the peninsula, and, indeed, Daesh, are taking advantage of the vacuum created by the absence of governance. That is all the more reason why we are encouraging the necessary stakeholders to come to the table.

My hon. Friend the Member for Reigate (Crispin Blunt) is right to say co-ordination of humanitarian aid is needed. The port of Hodaydah is currently under Houthi control, and until we can open it up, ships with humanitarian aid will continue to queue up and be unable to get in to provide that important aid for the rest of the country.

Emily Thornberry: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for calling me in the circumstances. I also thank my right hon. Friend the Member for Leicester East (Keith Vaz) for securing the urgent question. The authority and passion he brings to the issue of Yemen is without equal in this House. For the last year and a half my right hon. Friend has been consistent and principled in his advice. Let us be clear that the difference between that and what we have heard this week from the Government could not be more stark. On Yemen, there is no consistency and no principle.

Last Thursday, we heard the Foreign Secretary say that Saudi Arabia was fighting proxy wars in countries like Yemen, and we know the consequences all too well: thousands of civilians killed, the country's agricultural infrastructure destroyed, millions of Yemeni children facing starvation. Let us be clear: the Foreign Secretary was absolutely right on this, and we say, "Good for you, Boris." Yet he has still been slapped down by Downing Street and forced to go to Riyadh to "clarify his remarks"—and he has sent his junior Minister here today to support Saudi Arabia's actions to the hilt. It seems that he will not support our calls for an independent UN investigation into Saudi Arabia's alleged war crimes, and he will continue selling it arms to prosecute its proxy wars. There is no consistency, there is no principle, there is just more shabby hypocrisy.

There are many questions I would like to ask the Minister today, but let me just ask one. It is the same question asked of him by my right hon. Friend the Member for Leicester East, and he has not had an answer, so I will ask it again. For two months now the UN Security Council has been waiting for the United Kingdom to present its proposed resolution to effect a ceasefire in Yemen to allow access for humanitarian relief. For two months, a draft resolution has been in circulation, so let me ask the Minister again: why has the resolution not been presented and who is holding it up, because the people of Yemen cannot afford any more delay?

Tobias Ellwood: I am not sure where to start. I will focus on the serious questions the hon. Lady poses rather than the political points-scoring she tries to involve in all these things, which I am afraid means I take on board less and less the points she actually made. Because she has obviously run out of questions to ask this week, she is regurgitating last week's questions, instead of focusing on what is needed today.

Emily Thornberry: Answer the question

Tobias Ellwood: If the hon. Lady holds on to her seat, I will answer all the questions—not just one question, but all the questions.

First, the Foreign Secretary made it clear—the hon. Lady should read the full passage of what he was saying—that there are concerns about the

leadership needed in Syria, Yemen and elsewhere, and that needs to be pushed forward; we need strong leadership in those places. As I said to the right hon. Member for Leicester East (Keith Vaz), the UN Security Council resolution is being discussed, but the hon. Lady should be aware of the details of how they are put together: we do not simply do it as a paper exercise; we do it by ensuring the work has been done to make sure it can stand. If the homework has not been done to make sure that the stakeholders are supportive of the resolution, what is the point of having the resolution anyway, other than to pat ourselves on the back and make ourselves look good? That may be good enough for the Labour party but it is certainly not good enough for the Government.

The hon. Lady did not mention the challenges we face with the Houthis themselves. I do not dispute that this has been a difficult campaign for the coalition. It has been new to conducting sustained warfare and has had to learn very difficult lessons in how to do that, governed by 21st century rules. However, I make it clear that the Houthis are causing huge problems in that country. That needs to be acknowledged by this House as well. They have committed extrajudicial killings, **unlawful** arrests, detentions, abductions, enforced disappearances and the shelling of civilians in places such as Taiz. Landmines have also been used. Those are all things that have prolonged this conflict; the Houthis have not been brought to the table. What is required now is for all sides to work with the Quad and the UN to ensure that we can get the necessary ceasefire in place, which will lead us to the UN resolution that the hon. Lady is calling for.

Sir Desmond Swayne: To what extent is intransigence on the part of President Hadi a block to a ceasefire?

Tobias Ellwood: The President is the legitimate leader of the country at the moment and we have to work with the stakeholders that he is representing to ensure that the roadmap is compatible with the needs and support of the people he represents. That is why we have had long discussions with him and the vice-president to ensure that we can bring them to the table. I take this opportunity to thank the Omanis, who have played such an important role in bringing the Houthis forward so that they can accept a long-term deal to take us away from military action to a political dialogue.

Patrick Grady: It is regrettable that the humanitarian situation has worsened to such an extent that the Disasters Emergency Committee has had to launch an appeal. We hope that it will be widely supported so that the people of Yemen do not, as has been predicted, literally run out of food in the coming months.

What more will the Government do to co-ordinate with the DEC and responders on the ground on the humanitarian response? What steps are the Government taking to ensure that that humanitarian response is not undermined by their continued laissez-faire attitude to the behaviour of Saudi Arabia? Calls for arms sales are only getting louder. Although we keep hearing that UK military officials are not carrying out strikes and are not directing operations, it begs the question, what are they doing on the ground to ensure that the coalition respects

international humanitarian law? We hear so much about the Government's positive relationship with Saudi Arabia, although it not clear whether that extends to the Foreign Secretary, but what good is that relationship if the Government cannot or will not use their influence to prevent the killing and starvation of innocent civilians?

Tobias Ellwood: Perhaps I can start with the hon. Gentleman's last point. I would be happy to present to him the speeches that the Foreign Secretary made during the Manama dialogue, which confirmed not only our important working relationship with our close ally Saudi Arabia, but the frank conversations we have with that country and the work we do in stopping terrorist attacks from taking place. The hon. Gentleman could then become familiar with why that relationship is important. If we broke that relationship, the Gulf and, one could argue, the region and the UK could easily become a more dangerous place. That is not something he would advocate.

The hon. Gentleman speaks about the war itself. He has made the point in the Chamber before—he has been consistent on this—about concerns over the errors that have been made. I share those concerns. Forgive me, I did not respond to the point that was made earlier about the call for an independent investigation into the incidents that have taken place, but I have made it clear that I will support the call for a UN independent investigation if it is deemed that the reports—
[Interruption.] Would the hon. Member for Islington South and Finsbury (Emily Thornberry) let me finish the point? If it is deemed that the reports that are coming forward—that is the way any country conducting sustained warfare operates—are not worthy, we will call for an independent investigation, but that is the process that we follow, that the United States is following right now on incidents that have taken place in Afghanistan, and indeed that Saudi Arabia follows: they conduct their own investigations. If those investigations are found wanting, I will support a UN independent investigation.

[...]

6.4 Debates

Yemen

26 Oct 2016 | 616 cc337-393

Yemen

18 Oct 2016 | 615 cc772-784

Human Rights and Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia

08 Jun 2016 | 611 cc113-139WH

6.5 Early Day Motions

Humanitarian crisis in Yemen

EDM 784 (session 2016-17)

07 Dec 2016

Douglas Chapman

That this House expresses its concern that the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is worsening; notes the Oxfam report which states that Yemen is a few months away from running out of food, which builds on the UN report stating that around half the population are food insecure; is alarmed that the ports so vital in maintaining the supply of food and medicines are subject to shipping restrictions and that the fuel required for the distribution of necessities is in desperately short supply; and calls on the UK Government to work with the international community to alleviate the human suffering in Yemen.

Ceasefire announcement in Yemen by Secretary Kerry

EDM 688 (session 2016-17)

16 Nov 2016

Keith Vaz

That this House supports the announcement by US Secretary of State John Kerry that the Saudi-led coalition and Houthi group in Yemen have agreed to a ceasefire which begins on 17 November 2016 believes a ceasefire to be vitally important in securing a permanent cessation of hostilities and diplomatic negotiations based on the roadmap presented by UN Special Envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed; notes that more than 10,000 people have been killed and over 3 million displaced since the conflict began 20 months ago; and calls on the Government to urge all parties to sign up to the agreement, follow the terms of the ceasefire and return to the negotiating table.

Ministerial corrections on Saudi Arabia and war crimes

EDM 569 (session 2016-17)

19 Oct 2016

Roger Godsiff

That this House notes with great concern the Government's decision to issue corrections to six Ministerial Statements on whether Saudi Arabia committed war crimes in Yemen just as Parliament was about to rise for the summer recess; condemns the timing of these statements as an attempt to avoid scrutiny and accountability; further notes that these corrections acknowledge that previous Government statements that Saudi Arabia was not violating human rights or committing war crimes in Yemen were incorrect; believes that the Government either knew or ought to have known that these statements were incorrect; is concerned that Ministers may have inadvertently misled the House; is extremely worried that, despite this acknowledgement by the Government that Saudi Arabia is in fact committing war crimes by targeting civilians and non-military infrastructure in Yemen, the UK is continuing to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia; remains concerned that

these weapons may be used to commit war crimes in Yemen by the Saudi regime, which is a dictatorship with no regard for democracy or human rights; notes that continuing to sell arms to the Saudi regime both enables and condones violence against civilians; further believes that the UK's standing in the world is diminished by this action; and strongly urges the Government to urgently reconsider its arms export policy to Saudi Arabia in light of these corrections and to prioritise the safety of civilians in Yemen and the UK's reputation in the world over the profits of arms companies.

Children and armed conflict in Yemen

EDM 138 (session 2016-17)

06 June 2016

Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh

That this House notes the UN Annual Report on children and armed conflict which has noted alarming trends relating to the number of children directly involved in the current conflict in the Yemen; recognises the work carried out by Save the Children in this area; supports calls made by Save the Children for the Government to support the establishment of an international impartial mechanism to investigate alleged violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws by all parties to the conflict in Yemen; and calls on the Government to suspend arms export licenses and reject new applications for arms exports to any parties that risk using them in contravention of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Cluster munitions use

EDM 78 (session 2016-17)

24 May 2016

Tom Brake

That this House notes with grave concern that, according to Amnesty International, fragments of UK-manufactured cluster munitions have been uncovered in Yemen; denounces the use of cluster munitions due to their indiscriminate and disproportionate nature; believes that any indiscriminate use of cluster munitions by Saudi Arabian forces in Yemen amounts to a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and is a violation of international humanitarian law; calls on the Government to suspend all arms exports to Saudi Arabia until international humanitarian law violations have been investigated and disproved; and urges the Government to call for a full independent inquiry into the use of cluster munitions in the Yemen war to establish the truth about such allegations.

7. Further reading

7.1 Humanitarian organisations

[Yemen Annual Report 2015/2016](#), Amnesty International

[Yemen 2016 Report](#), Human Rights Watch

[UNICEF Yemen Annual Report 2015](#)

[UNICEF: Latest on Yemen](#)

[Yemen Humanitarian Bulletin](#), *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, 14 December 2016

[Humanitarian needs overview: Yemen 2017](#), *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, November 2016

[Forthcoming Judicial Review \(7-9 February 2017\)](#) challenging the UK government's decision to continue to licence the export of military equipment to Saudi Arabia – legal documents available on the website of the Campaign Against Arms Trade

[A Shameful Relationship: UK Complicity in Saudi State Violence](#), April 2016 Report by Campaign against Arms Trade

7.2 Committee reports

[Government Response to the First Joint Report from the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee and International Development Committee, Session 2016–17, on the use of UK-manufactured arms in Yemen](#), 14 Nov 2016

[Government Response to the Fourth Report from the Foreign Affairs Committee, Session 2016–17, on the use of UK-manufactured arms in Yemen](#), 14 Nov 2016

[Statement from Rt Hon Dr Julian Lewis MP, Chairman of the Defence Committee](#)

[The use of UK-manufactured arms in Yemen](#), Fourth Report of Session 2016–17, Foreign Affairs Committee, HC 688, 15 September 2016

[The use of UK-manufactured arms in Yemen](#), First Joint Report of the Business, Innovation and Skills and International Development Committees of Session 2016–17, HC 679, 15 September 2016

[Crisis in Yemen: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2015–16](#), Second Special Report of Session 2016–17, International Development Committee, HC 557, 14 July 2016

[Crisis in Yemen](#), Fourth Report of Session 2015–16, International Development Committee, HC 532, 4 may 2016

7.3 Deposited Papers

Deposited Paper DEP2016-0991

21 Dec 2016

Letter dated 21/12/2016 from Tania Mathias MP to Michael Fallon MP regarding whether the Government will help clear bomblets from the villages in Yemen. 1p.

Deposited Paper DEP2016-0989

21 Dec 2016

Letter dated 21/12/2016 from Michael Fallon MP to Philip Hollobone MP regarding the number of BL755 cluster munitions exported to Saudi Arabia before 1989 and their shelf life. 1p.

Deposited Paper DEP2016-0939

08 Sep 2016

I. Letter dated 14/12/2016 from the Arabian Peninsula and Iran Department, Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), to Nick Hope MP regarding the Freedom of Information request relating to the FCO review of all correspondence and parliamentary proceedings on the subject of allegations of breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL) in Yemen by the Saudi-led Coalition and the publication of the WMS on this matter. 4p. II. Freedom of Information Act 2000 request 0709-16: digest of information relevant to the request [redacted] 27p.

Deposited Paper DEP2016-0673

12 Aug 2016

Letter dated 12/08/2016 from Tobias Ellwood MP to Stephen Twigg MP regarding corrections made to the Official Report relating to breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL) in Yemen by the Saudi-led Coalition 4 p.

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