



## DEBATE PACK

CDP 2020-0090 | 21 September 2020

# The situation in Yemen

Main Chamber

Thursday 24 September 2020

Backbench Business Committee

The debate will be led by Tim Loughton MP

The proceedings of this debate can be viewed on [Parliamentlive.tv](https://www.parliamentlive.tv)

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

# 1. Background

The fighting in Yemen has been ongoing since the failure, in 2011, of a Saudi-backed transition from long-time President Saleh to his deputy Abd Rabbuh Mansour al-Hadi. The rebel Houthi movement, based in the North and deeply hostile to the Saudis, took control of much of the country from the Hadi Government, entering the capital, Sanaa, in late 2014.

The present high-level conflict started in 2015 after a coalition, led by Saudi Arabia, was established to prop up the Hadi Government. According to the Saudi-led coalition, the conflict would only last a few months. But it has raged constantly since then, producing the [world's worst humanitarian disaster](#), with millions of people at risk from starvation and disease.

Attempts to broker peace have largely ended in failure. In December 2018 a [fragile peace process](#) started with an agreement in Stockholm. Its aim was to protect the vital port of al-Hodeidah on the Red Sea coast, where most international aid arrived. The agreement achieved partial de-escalation around the port. There was increasing violence in the south, however, where separatist forces were gaining strength, partly backed by the UAE.

In September 2019, the Houthis launched devastating missile attacks on Saudi oil infrastructure at Abqaiq, causing world oil prices to surge. There was an agreement between the Houthis and the Saudis to cease Houthi missile attacks and Saudi air strikes.

Since early 2020 de-escalation agreements have ceased to be effective. The Houthis resumed rocket attacks on Saudi Arabia, with assistance from Iran. Saudi Arabia restarted air strikes on Sanaa. [Iranian influence over the Houthis is growing](#), increasing the conflict's centrality to Iran's battle with Saudi Arabia over influence in the Middle East.

In March 2020 the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, called for a [global ceasefire to deal with the emerging coronavirus pandemic](#). Saudi Arabia announced a unilateral ceasefire. Reports suggest, however, that the [ceasefire has not been respected](#) and in April 2020 the secessionist Southern Transitional Council, based in the southern city of Aden, announced "self-government" for part of the south.

With hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people in camps, Yemen provides the ideal conditions for Covid-19 to spread. The [UN warned](#) in April 2020 that Covid-19: "could spread faster, more widely and with deadlier consequences than in many other countries." As long as there is no political resolution to the conflict, experts consider that an effective response to the pandemic is almost impossible.

The [conference for aid donors to Yemen](#) at the beginning of June 2020 saw donors pledge [\\$1.35 billion](#), when the UN's minimum requirement was [\\$2.4 billion](#). The 2020 total was a sharp fall from the [\\$2.6 billion pledged last year](#). The UK pledged \$196 million this year, the third highest after Saudi Arabia and the US. The UK has consistently been one of the biggest donors for Yemen; [in 2017 the UK was the biggest donor](#), pledging \$173m.

UN officials warned that UN-supported medical services would have to be cut, just as the coronavirus pandemic appeared to be surging in Yemen. [UNICEF warned](#) that the number of malnourished children in Yemen could rise by 20% to 2.4 million by the end of 2020, because of the shortfall in humanitarian funding.

In September 2020 Sweden, Germany, Kuwait and the UK convened a special meeting on Yemen, ahead of this month's UN General Assembly. Ministers warned of Yemen's rapid deterioration and the increasing risk of famine, and called on donors to follow through on their pledges for humanitarian assistance. Addressing the "catastrophic" shortfalls in humanitarian funding, the UK pledged a further £5.8 million, in addition to what was agreed in June at the conference for aid donors. The additional funding announced takes the UK's total contribution to the crisis to over £1 billion.

### **UK arms exports to Saudi**

Saudi Arabia has been accused of violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) during its military operations in Yemen. As such the conflict has drawn attention to UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia. In June 2019 an unfavourable court judgment led the UK Government to review all licences and to stop [granting any new export licences](#) for arms that might be used in Yemen, while it considered the implications of the judgement. Permission to appeal to the Supreme Court was granted on 9 July 2019.

In September 2019, the Government [apologised](#) after finding the Government had granted new export licences to Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners, therefore breaching the undertaking given to the Court of Appeal. In July 2020 the Government announced that it would [resume granting licences](#) for export to Saudi Arabia. The Secretary of State for International Trade said that, having applied a revised methodology to its decision-making process, the Government assessed "there is not a clear risk that the export of arms and military equipment to Saudi Arabia might be used in the commission of a serious violation of IHL". The Government also withdrew its Supreme Court appeal.

## 2. Press articles

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

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or the accuracy of external content.

[\*\*Yemen: 'Choices have been made to abandon these people', says UN official\*\*](#)

Sky News  
Aisha Zahid  
18 September 2020

[\*\*Yemen in 'a desperate situation' as famine looms and hundreds of thousands face starvation\*\*](#)

Sky News  
18 September 2020

[\*\*Congress Pressures Trump Administration to Restore Aid to Yemen\*\*](#)

Foreign Policy  
Jack Detsch and Robbie Gramer  
16 September 2020

[\*\*Saudi commander in Yemen removed in fresh purge\*\*](#)

The Guardian  
1 September 2020

[\*\*Soldier backed over Whitehall protest against Yemen war\*\*](#)

The Guardian  
Dan Sabbagh and Damien Gayle  
27 August 2020

[\*\*We need to reopen Yemen's airports and sea routes to save lives\*\*](#)

The Independent  
Jan Egeland  
19 August 2020

[\*\*Children forced to beg or work as hunger eclipses fear of Covid-19 in Yemen\*\*](#)

The Guardian  
Kate Hodal  
18 August 2020

[\*\*How a decaying oil tanker became a 'massive floating bomb' risking millions of lives in Yemen\*\*](#)

Daily Telegraph  
Campbell MacDiarmid  
18 July 2020

**[The legendary resilience of Yemen's women faces a new test – the Coronavirus](#)**

Save the Children

Sukaina Sharafuddin

20th April 2020 (updated 16th July 2020)

**[Mahmoud Ahmadinejad: Iran's controversial former president to offer to mediate in Yemen war, reports say](#)**

The Independent

Borzou Daragahi and Bel Trew

10 July 2020

**[Britain's hypocrisy in resuming arms sales to Saudi Arabia while taking a stand on human rights is astounding](#)**

The Independent

Andrew Smith

7 July 2020

**[Britain Says It Will Resume Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia](#)**

The New York Times

Stephen Castle

7 July 2020

**[Yemen crisis: Why is there a war?](#)**

BBC News Online

9 June 2020

**[Arms companies are hiding behind governments – it's time we held them accountable](#)**

Amnesty International

Patrick Wilcken

9 September 2019

### 3. Press releases

#### [Joint Communiqué on the conflict in Yemen](#)

**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**

**17 September 2020**

1. The Foreign Ministers of Germany, Kuwait, Sweden, and the United Kingdom co-hosted a meeting on Thursday 17 September 2020, in connection with the 75th United Nations General Assembly, with Ministers and representatives of United States, China, France, Russia, and the High Representative of the European Union, to discuss the urgent need for political progress in Yemen.
2. Following briefings by the UN Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for Yemen, the Group discussed the urgent need for military de-escalation and political progress in Yemen, underlining their full support for the Special Envoy, Mr Martin Griffiths, including his efforts to facilitate agreement between the Yemeni parties on the Joint Declaration comprised of a nationwide ceasefire, humanitarian and economic measures and the resumption of a comprehensive, inclusive political process. The Group reaffirmed the international community's firm commitment to uphold Yemen's sovereignty, unity, independence, and territorial integrity. They reiterated that only an inclusive political solution can end the conflict in Yemen.
3. The Group stressed the need for the parties, through the political process, to swiftly conclude a comprehensive transitional agreement in order to end the conflict, usher in a transitional period where power is shared among diverse political and social components, and at the end of this period, ensure a peaceful transition of power to a new, inclusive government on the basis of credible national elections. The Group underlined the need for an inclusive political process, including the full participation of women and youth. The Group called on the Government of the Republic of Yemen and the Houthis to engage with the Special Envoy constructively and continuously, without preconditions, in order to swiftly reach agreement on the UN peace proposals. The Group also called on the neighbours of Yemen to use their influence to this effect in support of UN efforts.
4. The Group stressed the urgent need for de-escalation across Yemen and a nationwide ceasefire, as well as a full implementation of resolution 2532. In this regard, they welcomed the Secretary-General's call on 25 March for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Yemen as well as the unilateral ceasefire announced by the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen on 8 April, and expressed regret that the Yemeni parties did not seize the opportunity to achieve a nationwide ceasefire. The Group voiced its great concern about the continuing Houthi offensive on Marib, putting residents and displaced persons there at grave risk, which threatens to derail the UN peace process. The Group emphasised its concern about continuing violence in the Yemen conflict, including the continuation of Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia, which pose a serious threat to regional security. The Group expressed its concern

about reports of continued civilian casualties. The Group called on all parties to fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law, including the protection of civilians, notably humanitarian workers and health personnel, as well as civilian infrastructures.

5. The Group reiterated its commitment to the Yemeni peace process and the relevant Security Council Resolutions, including UN Security Council Resolution 2216, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, and the National Dialogue Conference outcomes. It reiterated the importance of full compliance by Member States with the arms embargo imposed by UN Security Council resolutions concerning Yemen. The Group welcomed the announcement on 28 July of acceleration of the Riyadh Agreement, mediated by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and welcomed the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in this regard, and called on the Yemeni Government and Southern Transitional Council to fully implement those steps urgently. If implemented these agreements would bolster UN efforts to achieve a comprehensive solution.
6. The Group welcomed the commencement of the latest round of prisoner exchange negotiations in Geneva and called on the parties to urgently implement their stated commitments in this regard. The Group reaffirmed its full support for UNMHA and called on the Yemeni parties to respect the ceasefire in Hodeidah and to engage constructively on the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement, including the UNVIM mandate, and which remains an important part of the Yemen peace process. In this regard, the Group further called on the Yemeni parties, to engage constructively with UN proposals to ensure the adequate and unhindered flow of fuel, humanitarian goods, and food into Yemen through Hodeidah port and to establish a mechanism for directing port revenues to civil servant salary payments, based on the 2014 payroll database. The Group expressed concern over the humanitarian consequences of fuel shortages in northern Yemen. The Group emphasized the importance of ensuring that the civilian population can regularly access adequate supplies of fuel and other essential goods. The Group also reaffirmed its support to the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen.
7. Following the white note issued on food security risks by the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs on 4 September (with reference to UN Security Council Resolution 2417), the Group noted that economic and humanitarian indicators show rising food insecurity, and that famine is a realistic prospect in Yemen this year in the event of prolonged food import disruption or hindrances to distribution, exacerbated by the outbreak of Covid-19. In this regard, the Group expressed deep concern that the UN Humanitarian Response Plan has received only 30 per cent of the funding it needs this year. The Group expressed appreciation to the UK, US, Sweden, Kuwait, and the EU, for committing additional funding since the 2 June Pledging Conference to the UN Humanitarian Response Plan totalling over \$350m. In order to prevent famine, the Group called on all donors to disburse existing pledges immediately and to consider making further contributions.

The Group also discussed the central role of economic collapse in intensifying the risk of famine and urged Yemen's partners to consider all possible measures to strengthen the economy, including regular foreign-exchange injections into the Central Bank and steps to encourage robust flows of critical commercial imports through all of Yemen's ports. In this context, the Group reiterated the need to address the main drivers of the current humanitarian crisis, and referred to the ongoing coordinating efforts by the EU, the UN, and the World Bank in this regard.

8. The Group recognised that obstruction and interference with humanitarian assistance operations remains extremely challenging, particularly in northern Yemen. While the Group took note of initial steps taken by the Houthis, greater progress overall is needed to enable humanitarian organisations to continue delivering life-saving assistance to millions of vulnerable people throughout Yemen. The Group called on the Yemeni parties to facilitate full, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access to all the people in need. The Group urged potential donors who have made significant contributions in the past, to step-up humanitarian assistance to the UN-led response.
9. The Group further recognised the grave threat posed by the Safer oil tanker, whose dire condition risks an environmental, economic and humanitarian catastrophe to Yemen and the region, and called on the Houthis to urgently facilitate unconditional and safe access for UN experts to conduct an assessment and repair mission.
10. The Group looked to the Security Council to review progress at the next session, and agreed to reconvene at senior official level within six months. The Group welcomed the German offer to host such a meeting in Berlin.

**Yemen has “never looked more likely to slide into famine”,  
Foreign Secretary warns**  
**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**  
**17 September 2020**

The humanitarian situation in Yemen is rapidly deteriorating and the war-torn country has never been more at risk of mass starvation, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said today, 17 September, whilst on an official visit to the United States.

Speaking at a special meeting convened by the UK, Germany, Kuwait and Sweden ahead of this month's UN General Assembly, the Foreign Secretary warned that humanitarian funding for non-government organisations and United Nations (UN) agencies is now catastrophically low. This year, the UN has only received just over 30% of what it needs to help those who depend on aid for their survival.

In addition to ensuring immediate humanitarian needs are met, the UK remains at the forefront of international efforts to reach a political solution to the conflict, using its role as the lead on Yemen at the UN Security Council to drive political progress to end the conflict. At today's

meeting, the Foreign Secretary stressed the need for the parties to cooperate constructively with the Special Envoy and agree to his proposals to immediately stop the fighting and restart peace talks.

The Foreign Secretary is today announcing £5.8 million of new UK aid to help avert a famine in Yemen, taking the UK's total contribution since the conflict began to over £1 billion. This year, UK support will help at least 500,000 vulnerable people each month to buy food and household essentials including soap and medicines.

Speaking at a meeting of the permanent UN Security Council (UNSC) members and key allies, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The humanitarian situation in Yemen is now the worst it has ever been, and compounded with the threat of coronavirus, the country has never looked more likely to slide into famine.

Unless donors urgently act now and follow through on their pledges, hundreds of thousands of people are at risk of dying simply from starvation.

We also need to see unwavering support for Special Envoy Martin Griffiths' plans to secure a ceasefire that ends the suffering.

At the launch of the new Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the Foreign Secretary appointed the UK's first Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs, Nick Dyer. Over the coming weeks he will be urgently raising the increasing risk of famine with our allies and partners to spur international action.

Speaking about the situation in Yemen, Nick Dyer said:

There is no plan B for Yemen. The war-torn country is facing an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe, with hundreds of thousands at risk, unless world leaders take urgent action now.

The Foreign Secretary also expressed concern at the threat posed by the Safer oil tanker, which the UK recently called for a dedicated UNSC session on. With 1.14 million barrels of oil on board, any leaks into the Red Sea would make Yemen's situation worse. The Houthis must follow through on their promises and allow UN experts to carry out essential work to prevent a regional environmental, economic and humanitarian catastrophe.

Restrictions on humanitarian access are stopping aid from reaching those who need it, particularly in Houthi-controlled areas. Humanitarians on the ground are already doing an extremely difficult job, and the Foreign Secretary called on all parties to refrain from hindering them any further.

The UK also joined a UN Security follow-up session on resolution 2417 today, to ensure humanitarian access to civilian populations in conflict zones and protect millions of people from extreme hunger in Yemen, the DRC, South Sudan and Nigeria.

**Moving toward a ceasefire in Yemen**

**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**

**15 September 2020**

Thank you, Mr President. And let me also thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for their briefings. And I think I'd also like to thank the Yemenis who today, through Mark Lowcock, have spoken to the Security Council. It's because the situation is so desperate for Yemenis, like those who have spoken, that this Council and the parties on the ground need to act.

We are extremely concerned that the humanitarian situation in Yemen continues to plunge to new depths as the country battles an economic crisis, an increasing risk of famine and a major outbreak of Covid-19. While we assess that Yemen is over the initial Covid-19 peak, we are concerned about the potential for new waves of infections and even more deaths. It is vital that public health mitigation efforts continue, and we call on all Yemeni parties to report cases transparently to ensure unrestricted humanitarian access and facilitate the UN's response.

Mr President, the indirect effects of Covid-19, including on Yemen's fragile economy, will have a far longer lasting impact. Yemen's currency has collapsed to record lows, leading food prices to rise by over 20 percent since January. Urgent external financial assistance to the Central Bank is now needed to stabilise prices and enable more people to afford food.

In light of this economic crisis, recent food insecurity and economic data suggest that conditions in Yemen already mirror or are even worse than those of late 2018, when pockets of famine were last identified across the country. And as we've heard, famine is now a realistic prospect in Yemen this year.

In addition to economic support, the key action that the international community can take to prevent famine is urgently to provide significant funding to the United Nations humanitarian appeal.

With the new General Assembly High Level Week fast approaching, the United Nations has received just \$900 million this year, compared to around \$2.6 billion at this point last year. This funding gap is curtailing the humanitarian response and seven million people will stop receiving food if new funding is not in place by October.

In response to this funding crisis, the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary announced an additional \$32 million funding uplift for Yemen earlier this month, in addition to what has already been pledged by the United Kingdom. We welcome other countries' announcements of extra funds, but call on all donors to play their part and urgently provide funding to the UN appeal. And we call on all of those who have given money in previous years to do so again to the same levels this year.

Mr President, a political solution is needed desperately to alleviate the humanitarian crisis and end the conflict for good. And as I've said repeatedly in this Council, the United Kingdom fully supports Martin Griffiths' painstaking and patient efforts. I want to urge today the

Yemeni parties – by which I mean the government of Yemen just as much as the Houthis – to cooperate with him and to agree to his proposals as soon as possible. The window of opportunity to end this conflict will close. It is in the hands of the parties to work with Martin Griffiths and reach an agreement. It is in their hands whether they are ready to act in the interests of their people or only in their own self-interest.

I want to welcome Security Council unity on this issue here and at ministerial level. Later this week we will be co-hosting an event on Yemen with the Secretary-General and others, which will demonstrate our close Council and international coordination. We must stay united, colleagues, in our messages to the parties and our support for Martin Griffiths so that he can reach an agreement.

The United Kingdom remains extremely concerned by the situation in Marib. The Houthi offensive is not only leading to a distressing loss of life, but it threatens to derail the political process at this crucial stage. We welcome and fully support the Special Envoy's strong statements on Marib. I urge this Council and the wider international community to send a strong, unified message to the Houthis that they must cease their offensive on Marib and negotiate peace.

Mr President, we should not forget the SAFER oil tanker, which this Council has been briefed upon many times and held an individual session on earlier in the summer. It poses a significant environmental and economic threat to the region. While I welcome progress made in negotiations between the Houthis and UNOPS on the scope of the assessment and repair mission, this mission needs to happen urgently. The Houthis must follow through on their promises by allowing the UN experts to board the tanker to carry out their work as soon as possible.

Mr President, time is running out. The parties need to move quickly to agree a ceasefire and engage in a comprehensive political process. If they do not, this Council should be ready to take action.

### **[Implementing international humanitarian law in Yemen](#)**

#### **Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

**22 November 2020**

The British government, too, wants to thank the Assistant Secretary-General and the Special Envoy for the hard work that they are doing and their teams. We join others in welcoming the Riyadh agreement and the vital role the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia played in brokering that, and we share South Africa's point, an emphasis on inclusivity. I think on momentum and on making best use of next year, our Indonesian, German and Côte D'Ivoire colleagues put it very well, and we, too, share that sense of hope that something really meaningful can be done.

I wanted to say that, Martin, we welcome your continued consultations between the parties. It's important that the Riyadh agreement and de-escalation efforts are integrated into a wider, inclusive political process. And we would urge you and Saudi Arabia to work closely to ensure that the respective initiatives are integrated and enabling a holistic approach.

The Council, the wider community needs to be ready to support a renewed peace process and you can count on the United Kingdom to do its utmost in that regard. And we hope for broader implementation of the Stockholm agreement to continue in parallel with these efforts.

Turning to humanitarian, as the Assistant Secretary-General said, this is a very sobering picture; I share German concerns on this. The United Kingdom has committed nearly \$1 billion of assistance since the conflict began and over a quarter of this this financial year. We are contributing to the immediate food needs of more than one million Yemenis each month, treating 70,000 children for malnutrition and providing over one million people with improved water supply and basic sanitation. So we don't underestimate at all the scale and the enormity of the task and we applaud all those who work on the ground to deliver aid to vulnerable people in such difficult and dangerous circumstances.

The Council needs to be confident that the assistance provided by the international community is indeed reaching those in need and that means that it is vital, in turn, that humanitarian access improves right across the country, including in Houthi-controlled areas in the north. And the United Kingdom takes this opportunity to call on the Houthis to engage urgently and constructively with the UN humanitarian coordinator on the ground, Lisa Grande, to ensure that vulnerable people can be accessed and to comply immediately with SCR 2451 by facilitating swift, unhindered and safe humanitarian access.

We know that the operating environment for humanitarian organisations is almost impossible; in the north, 60 percent of humanitarian sub-agreements this year have not been signed by the Houthis and that affects four million people. This is obviously something that cannot continue. Humanitarian organisations are ready to save lives. They must be allowed to do their jobs.

Turning to the safer oil tanker, a number of representatives mentioned that today, we share concerns. We think an action by the Houthis on this issue is reckless. We call on them to allow the UN team access to the tanker before it's too late.

I want to say a quick word about the economy. The progress made recently between the parties in facilitating fuel imports through the Red Sea ports is very welcome. It is now vital that the government of Yemen and the Houthis engage constructively with the UN to agree an effective mechanism for port revenue sharing. A long-term solution needs to be secured so that sufficient levels of fuel can enter the Red Sea ports each month.

Finally, I wish to conclude by echoing what Germany and Belgium said about the importance of implementing International Humanitarian Law unconditionally.

## 4. PQs

### Yemen: Cluster Munitions

11 September 2020 | HL7655

**Asked by: Lord Hylton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reported use of banned cluster weapons in Yemen; and what progress, if any, has been made towards a ceasefire in that country.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**

The UK welcomed Saudi Arabia's commitment in 2016 that it would no longer use BL-755 cluster munitions, which were exported from the UK, with the last delivery being in 1989. We have no evidence that this assurance has been breached and have not seen evidence of any recent use of cluster munitions in Yemen since 2016. We continue to monitor the situation closely. We regularly emphasise to Saudi Arabia the importance of conducting thorough and transparent investigations into alleged International Humanitarian Law violations. UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths is continuing to seek the parties agreement to a permanent ceasefire and a resumption of the UN-led political process. We fully support these efforts and urge the parties to engage constructively with the Special Envoy.

### Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia

11 September 2020 | 84666

**Asked by: Emily Thornberry**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 September 2020 to Question 78567 and grouped questions, whether the 21 August 2018 air-strike on fishing boats in Eritrean Waters was (a) among the 300 incidents analysed by her Department to consider whether or not it constituted a possible breach of international humanitarian law and (b) one of the small number of incidents assessed to be a possible violation of international humanitarian law.

**Answered by: Mr Ranil Jayawardena | Department for International Trade**

The International Humanitarian Law Analysis was applied to 310 incidents. As at 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020, there were 528 allegations entered on the MOD Tracker, of which 19 were assessed to be duplicates. A further 166 were assessed to be "not credible", which means the information and intelligence available indicates that the alleged events were not likely to have happened or were not likely to have involved fixed-wing aircraft operated by the Saudi-led Coalition. In addition, 33 allegations were awaiting assessment.

Our analysis as to whether or not an incident constituted a 'possible' breach of international humanitarian law used all available sources of information, including some that are necessarily confidential and

sensitive. As a result, we are not able to provide details of individual assessments for national security reasons.

We have assessed that there were a small number of incidents that were 'possible' violations, which have been treated for the purposes of this analysis as violations of international humanitarian law.

**[Yemen: Overseas Aid](#)**  
**11 September 2020 | 82294**

**Asked by: Anna McMorris**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the total budget was this year for DFID's Yemen aid programme; and with reference to his 22 July announcement of cuts to the aid budget of £2.9bn, how much will be cut from the programme's proposed spend.

**Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**

The UK committed £160 million in new aid for Yemen for the current financial year (2020/21) at the 2020 Yemen Humanitarian Pledging Conference on 2 June.

We have every intention of meeting our commitment and have already disbursed 60 per cent of our £160 million funding for this year. We will continue to disburse funding quickly to ensure our partners have the resources to continue delivering assistance.

**[Yemen](#)**  
**08 Sep 2020 | 679 cc480-481**

**Asked by: Paul Holmes**

What recent assessment the Government has made of the political and humanitarian situation in Yemen.

**Asked by: Alison Thewliss**

What recent assessment the Government has made of the political and humanitarian situation in Yemen

**Answered by: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**

The humanitarian situation in Yemen is worsening, and we are particularly concerned about the growth of famine. In addition, UK-funded modelling predicts that the number of symptomatic cases of covid-19 in Yemen could reach as many as 10 million. In response to the risk of famine, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs announced last week that we are committing a further £25 million to Yemen, and we continue to reiterate the UK's unequivocal support for the efforts of the United Nations special envoy, Martin Griffiths.

**Asked by: Paul Holmes**

Does the Minister agree that the action this Government have taken to support those in need in Yemen will be further enhanced by bringing together our diplomatic clout and development expertise in the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office?

**Answered by: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**

I agree with my hon. Friend on that. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary speaks with his international counterparts about the international effort to support Yemen, and I speak with the Yemenis themselves. The best thing that can happen for the people of Yemen is for the conflict to cease, which is why diplomatic pressure is applied to that end.

**Asked by: Alison Thewliss**

Today, Oxfam campaigners are visiting the new FCDO to hand in a letter on behalf of thousands of people, including my constituents, that calls on the UK Government to stop fuelling the war in Yemen and to reverse the decision to resume arms sales licences to Saudi Arabia. Does the Secretary of State not accept the inherent contradiction between selling arms with one part of the FCDO and providing aid with the other? Does he also accept that what Yemen needs is an urgent and immediate ceasefire, rather than an escalation of this five-year-old conflict?

**Answered by: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**

The UK has an internationally respected and robust arms trade licensing regime. We have a close working relationship with the allies that are involved in the conflict in Yemen, to minimise civilian casualties and collateral damage. It is completely legitimate for all countries around the world to defend themselves against external aggression, and we are proud of the work we are doing to help the people of Yemen through this difficult time.

**[Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia](#)****03 Sep 2020 | 81946****Asked by: Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Written Statement of 7 July 2020 on Trade Update and the Answer of 13 July 2020 to Question 68798, what criteria were used to determine whether the 535 incidents which, for the purpose of the Government's analysis are being treated as violations of International Humanitarian Law, constituted a pattern.

**Answering member: Mr Ranil Jayawardena | Department for International Trade**

Our analysis as to whether or not an incident constituted a 'possible' breach of international humanitarian law (IHL) was applied to over 300 incidents. The assessments used all available sources of information, including some that are necessarily confidential and sensitive. As a

result, we are not able to provide details of individual assessments for national security reasons.

We have assessed that there were a small number of incidents that were 'possible' violations, which have been treated for the purposes of this analysis as 'violations' of international humanitarian law.

The Statement made by my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade on 7th July was clear that we sought to determine whether these 'violations' were indicative of:

- (i) any patterns of non-compliance;
- (ii) a lack of commitment on the part of Saudi Arabia to comply with IHL; and/or
- (iii) a lack of capacity or systemic weaknesses which might give rise to a clear risk of IHL breaches.

Our analysis did not reveal any such patterns, trends or systemic weaknesses.

**[Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia](#)**  
**03 Sep 2020 | 81945**

**Asked by: Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Written Statement of 7 July 2020 on Trade Update, what the threshold is at which the Government would assess the number of incidents violating International Humanitarian Law as unacceptable in the licensing of arms sales to Saudi Arabia for use in Yemen, regardless of whether they constituted a pattern; and what the basis is for the level of that threshold.

**Answering member: Mr Ranil Jayawardena | Department for International Trade**

All licence applications are considered on a case by case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria.

Specifically, Criterion 2c makes sure that we do not grant licences if there is a clear risk that the items might be used in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law. My Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade set out in her Written Ministerial Statement of 7th July how she has fully considered Criterion 2c in relation to the re-taking of the licensing decisions, in accordance with the Court of Appeal's judgment.

HM Government is able to review licences – and suspend or revoke as necessary – when circumstances require, and this is done in line with the Consolidated Criteria.

**Yemen: Peace Negotiations****02 Sep 2020 | 84360****Asked by: Dr Luke Evans**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress his Department is making on facilitating a positive solution to the conflict in Yemen.

**Answering Member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**

The UK continues to support the efforts of the UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths to secure the Yemeni parties' agreement to his proposals for a nationwide ceasefire, humanitarian confidence-building measures and a resumption of the UN-led political process. We engage regularly with international partners on Yemen, including through our role as penholder in the UN Security Council. On 2 September, the Prime Minister discussed Yemen with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. On 24 August I spoke with Yemeni Foreign Minister Hadhrami about the peace process and developments in the South. On 1 July, the Foreign Secretary wrote a joint op-ed with his Swedish and German counterparts calling for the international community to back peace efforts.

**Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia****1 September 2020 | 78567****Asked by: Emily Thornberry**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Written Statement of 7 July 2020 on Trade Update, whether the 30 July 2019 air-strike on a market in Al-Thabet was (a) among the alleged incidents of violations of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen examined by her Department under the revised methodology and (b) one of the incidents classed as a possible breach of International Humanitarian Law.

**Answered by: Mr Ranil Jayawardena | Department for International Trade**

Our analysis as to whether or not an incident constituted a 'possible' breach of international humanitarian law was applied to over 300 incidents.

The assessments used all available sources of information, including some that are necessarily confidential and sensitive. As a result, we are not able to provide details of individual assessments for national security reasons.

We have assessed that there were a small number of incidents that were 'possible' violations, which have been treated for the purposes of this analysis as violations of international humanitarian law.

[Hezbollah and Yemen: Weapons](#)

01 Sep 2020 | 77766

**Asked by: John Lamont**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent estimate his Department has made of the (a) weapons arsenals and (b) origin of weaponry of (i) Hezbollah and (ii) the Houthis.

**Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK remains concerned by reports that Hizballah continues to amass an arsenal of weapons in breach of UN Security Council Resolutions 1559 and 1701. We regularly raise this at the UN Security Council, and we call on all parties to abide by the provisions of the relevant UNSCRs. The UK is also concerned that, according to the UN Panel of Experts on Yemen, military equipment of Iranian origin was introduced into Yemen after the imposition of the targeted arms embargo, in violation of Security Council Resolution 2216 (2015). This reaffirms our concerns about destabilising Iranian activity in Yemen and the wider region.

[Yemen: Coronavirus](#)

01 Sep 2020 | 77739

**Asked by: Gill Furniss**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the level of risk to Yemen of the covid-19 pandemic.

**Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Modelling funded by the Department for International Development predicts that Yemen could suffer up to 85,000 COVID-19 deaths in a worst case scenario. In response, the UK is disbursing its £160 million commitment to Yemen promptly this financial year to help the UN to tackle the spread of COVID-19. We expect our funding to provide over 700,000 medical consultations for a range of health conditions, train 1,500 healthcare workers to work safely in a COVID-19 environment and provide a much-needed boost to nearly 600 health centres to continue providing existing health services.

[FSO Safer](#)

01 Sep 2020 | 77738

**Asked by: Gill Furniss**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to his Department's press release entitled, UK warns of catastrophic environmental threat from hazardous Yemeni oil tanker, what diplomatic steps he is taking to tackle the (a) humanitarian, (b) environmental and (c) economic threat posed by a potential oil spill from the FSO Safer oil tanker in the Red Sea.

**Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The FSO SAFER oil tanker is an environmental disaster waiting to happen. Unless UN experts are allowed to access it, we are facing a catastrophic environmental threat. The Houthis cannot continue to hold the environment and people's livelihoods to ransom. It is in everyone's interests, especially the suffering people of Yemen, that this tanker is made safe immediately. In support of UN efforts, we have raised this directly with the Houthis and with other leaders to try avert an avoidable crisis. We are also working with the UN and other donors to ensure there is sufficient funding and that contingency plans are in place should a spill occur in the interim.

**[Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia](#)  
03 Aug 2020 | HL7396**

**Asked by: Lord Roberts of Llandudno**

To ask Her Majesty's Government why they decided to resume granting export licences for the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia.

**Answering member: Lord Grimstone of Boscobel | Department for International Trade**

The Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) of 7th July 2020 set out details of the revised methodology developed to comply with the Court of Appeal's judgment of 20th June 2019 and applied to re-take the decisions remitted by the Court of Appeal on the correct legal basis. It also set out why my Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade assessed that there is not a clear risk that the export of arms and military equipment to Saudi Arabia might be used in the commission of a serious violation of International Humanitarian Law.

Having now re-taken the decisions that were the subject of judicial review on the correct legal basis, as required by the Order of the Court of Appeal of 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019, it follows that the undertaking given to the Court – that we would not grant any new licences for the export of arms or military equipment to Saudi Arabia for possible use in Yemen – falls away. The broader commitment that was given to Parliament, relating to licences for Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners, also no longer applies.

Decisions on export licence applications for Saudi Arabia and its Coalition partners for possible use in the conflict in Yemen can now be taken. All export licence applications will be assessed against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria.

**[Yemen: Peace Negotiations](#)  
29 Jul 2020 | HL7023**

**Asked by: Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with international partners about securing a permanent ceasefire in Yemen.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK continues to support the efforts of the UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths to secure the parties' agreement to proposals for a nationwide ceasefire and resumption of the UN-led political process. We engage regularly with international partners on Yemen, including through our role as penholder in the UN Security Council. On 1 July, the Foreign Secretary wrote a joint op-ed with his Swedish and German counterparts calling for the international community to back peace efforts. On 18 June, the Minister for the Middle East and North Africa spoke with senior Yemeni leaders and the Special Envoy during a "virtual visit" and called for urgent action to secure peace and avoid a humanitarian catastrophe.

**[Saudi Arabia: Military Aid](#)**

**28 Jul 2020 | 76728**

**Asked by: Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK military (a) personnel and (b) advisers are operating in targeting centres in Saudi Arabia.

**Answering member: James Heappey | Ministry of Defence**

We have a very small number of liaison officers in Saudi Armed Forces headquarters. The role of the liaison officers is to provide the UK with greater insight into Saudi processes and operations. All UK military personnel in Saudi Arabia remain under UK command and control. More specifically, as my predecessor said in his reply to Question 228123, our liaison officers working in the Saudi Air Operations Centre observe Saudi-led coalition air operations in Yemen to help the UK support Saudi compliance with International.

**[Arms Trade: Saudi Arabia](#)**

**21 Jul 2020 | 75398**

**Asked by: Owen Thompson**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate he has made of the number of credible reports of international humanitarian law breaches required to be recorded that would result in the suspension of UK licenses for the export of (a) arms and (b) military equipment to Saudi Arabia for potential use in Yemen.

**Answering member: Mr Ranil Jayawardena | Department for International Trade**

HM Government is able to review licences – and suspend or revoke as necessary – when circumstances require, and this is done in line with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria.

Specifically, Criterion 2c makes sure that we do not grant licences if there is a clear risk that the items might be used in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law.

My Rt Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade set out in her Written Ministerial Statement of 7th July how she has fully considered Criterion 2c in relation to the re-taking of the licensing decisions, in accordance with the Court of Appeal's judgment.

### **Yemen: Humanitarian Aid**

**15 Jul 2020 | 71174**

#### **Asked by: Simon Baynes**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, in what form humanitarian aid from the UK has been provided to civilians in Yemen in the last 12 months.

#### **Answering member: James Cleverly | Department for International Development**

The UK provided £240 million in aid to Yemen in the financial year (19/20) through UN and NGO humanitarian and development partners, delivering a range of interventions. This included providing on average 500,000 Yemenis each month with cash transfers and vouchers through the World Food Programme.

DFID funding to UNICEF screened over 400,000 children for severe acute malnutrition and enrolled 45,000 children in nutrition programmes following screening. Through DFID funded NGOs, including CARE and ACTED, we treated a further 8,000 children and pregnant women for acute malnutrition,

UK aid helped provide over 1 million people with access to clean drinking water and sanitation and over 1.5 million with an emergency water supply. The UK also contributed 25% of the costs of Oral Cholera Vaccination campaigns in 2019, which have helped to vaccinate more than 2 million Yemenis since they began in 2018.

### **Topical Questions**

**15 Jul 2020 | 678 cc1507-8**

#### **Asked by: Neale Hanvey**

Five hundred and sixteen—that is the number of known breaches of international law in Yemen by Saudi forces, an increase of at least 200 in recent years. Yet last week, the Government claimed they were only isolated events and no pattern existed, as they resumed selling weapons that are killing Yemeni civilians. Given the DFID-FCO merger, can the Minister please explain how they reconcile that with UK stated aims to provide water, food, sanitation and peace to Yemen—and exactly how many breaches of international law are required to establish a pattern?

#### **Answered by: James Cleverly | International Development**

The UK Government welcome Saudi Arabia's unilateral ceasefire in Yemen, and we are disappointed that the Houthis have not engaged with that ceasefire. The United Kingdom's arms control regime is one of the most robust in the world, and we will ensure that we continue to support the people of Yemen and NGOs working in Yemen, as we have done with our recent funding announcements.

**Yemen: Military Intervention**

**13 Jul 2020 | HL6223**

**Asked by: Baroness Helic | Party: Conservative Party**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the role of Iran in supplying missile technology and other weapons to the Houthi forces in Yemen.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We have repeatedly set out concerns about Iranian destabilising behaviour in the region, including its political, financial and military support to the Houthis in Yemen. This support poses a real threat to regional stability and security, and we are committed to working with partners, including the UN, to address these concerns. The supply of weapons to the Houthis is prohibited under a number of UN Security Council Resolutions, including UNSCR 2216. Although the UN conventional arms embargo on Iran, under UNSCR 2231, is due to expire in October, UN sanctions targeting the supply of weapons to the Houthis will endure under other Resolutions. The EU arms embargo and UN ballistic missile restrictions on Iran will also remain in place until 2023. The UK encourages all states to implement national export control best practice in support of these regimes.

**Yemen: World Food Programme**

**06 Jul 2020 | 65972**

**Asked by: Mark Pritchard**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she is taking to support the World Food Programme distribute overseas aid to Yemen.

**Answering member: James Cleverly | Department for International Development**

The UK provided £65 million to the World Food Programme (WFP) last financial year (2019/20), to help support the delivery of life-saving food assistance in Yemen. This funding provided 3 million cash transfers and vouchers to vulnerable Yemenis to enable them to buy food and household essentials. In addition to our food security support, we also provided funding to WFP's logistics operation, which helped to coordinate the delivery of humanitarian assistance into Yemen.

We are continuing to support WFP in the delivery of emergency aid this financial year (2020/21) through our new £160 million funding commitment to Yemen. This includes funding for WFP, through which we expect to provide support to at least 300,000 vulnerable people each month, to help them buy food and household essentials.

**Yemen: Military Intervention****30 Jun 2020 | 64217****Asked by: Margaret Ferrier**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the UN Secretary-General's decision to remove the Saudi-led Coalition from his annual list of perpetrators of grave violations against children in conflict zones despite verified evidence of ongoing grave violations against children committed by the coalition in Yemen in 2019.

**Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

At the UN Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict on 23 June, the UK reaffirmed our commitment to tackling violations against children in armed conflict and highlighted the need for a transparent and credible framework for accountability based on a standardised and evidence-backed approach to de-listing and listing of state and non-state actors for violations. The UK takes extremely seriously allegations of abuses against children in armed conflict. We strongly support the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and continue to fund her office and work. The UK regularly raises the importance of human rights with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, including at senior levels. The Coalition must protect children's rights and continue to take positive steps to protect children in armed conflict, such as by implementing the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the UN and Saudi Arabia in March 2019.

## 5. Other Parliamentary material

### 5.1 Debates

#### [Iran: Stability in the Middle East](#)

**30 January 2020 | 801 cc1554-1568**

Lords question for short debate on what assessment they have made of the influence of Iran on stability in the Middle East.

#### [Yemen Peace Process](#)

**23 May 2019 | 660 cc836-869**

Motion that this House notes that 22 May 2019 is the 28th anniversary of the unification of Yemen, when that country emerged from a long and painful civil war; further notes that today Yemen is once again in a deep and pitiful state of conflict, having entered the fifth year of its current, tragic war; acknowledges that the most recent estimate places the death toll in excess of 70,000, of which 10,000 have died in the last five months alone; notes that Yemen remains in the midst of the world's worst humanitarian crisis, in which at least 85,000 children have starved to death and almost 200,000 have contracted cholera in 2019 alone; commends the work of the UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, who brought opposing sides together for agreements including on a ceasefire in the Al-Hodeidah Governate; regrets that the implementation of those agreements has been slow or non-existent; and calls on the Government to take every possible measure to support an immediate ceasefire, the flow of humanitarian aid and further peace talks in Yemen. Agreed to on question.

#### [Yemen](#)

**15 Nov 2018 | 793 cc2061-2075**

Lords question for short debate on what steps they are taking with international partners to end the conflict in Yemen.

#### [Yemen](#)

**11 Sep 2018 | Emergency debate | 646 cc605-653**

Motion that this House has considered the recent escalation of violence in Yemen.

### 5.2 Urgent Questions

#### [Sale of Arms: War in Yemen](#)

**13 July 2020 | 678 cc1255-1267**

Urgent question on the decision to resume the sale of arms to the Saudi-led coalition for use in the war in Yemen.

## 5.3 Written Ministerial Statements

### [Annual Human Rights and Democracy Report 2019](#)

16 July 2020 | HCWS379 | Dominic Raab

I have today laid before Parliament a copy of the 2019 Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Report on Human Rights and Democracy (CP number 273).

The report analyses human rights developments overseas in 2019 and illustrates how the government works to promote and defend human rights globally.

The report assesses the situation in 30 countries, which the FCO has designated as its Human Rights Priority Countries. These are Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Burma, Burundi, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Libya, Maldives, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, **Yemen**, and Zimbabwe.

Almost 75 years ago, the UN Charter established the three pillars of the UN's work: maintaining international peace and security; promoting and protecting human rights; and fostering development. As we mark the UN's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the UK's commitment to these three pillars remains steadfast. This report details the UK's partnerships with human rights defenders, our leadership on promoting media freedom and gender equality, our work to eradicate modern slavery, and our commitment to deliver change for those who are abused, targeted, or killed for their religion or beliefs.

### [Trade Update](#)

07 July 2020 | HCWS339 | Liz Truss

I want to update the House on the steps that have been taken to comply with the judgment of the Court of Appeal of 20 June 2019 regarding licences for military exports to Saudi Arabia for possible use in the conflict in Yemen.

The legal proceedings concerned the decisions of the then Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills of 9 December 2015:

- Not to suspend extant export licences for the sale or transfer of arms and military equipment to Saudi Arabia for possible use in the conflict in Yemen; and
- To continue to grant further such licences.

The legal proceedings concerned Criterion 2c of the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria – which requires the Government to assess Saudi Arabia's attitude towards relevant principles of international law and provides that the Government will not grant a licence if there is a **clear risk** that the items might be used

in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law (IHL).

The Divisional Court found in favour of the Government in its judgment of July 2017, noting that we applied a rigorous and robust, multi-layered process of analysis to making our licensing decisions. Our approach has focused on a predictive evaluation of risk as to the attitude and future conduct of the Saudi-led coalition, recognising the inherent difficulties of seeking to reach findings on IHL for specific incidents where we do not have access to complete information. Even so, this analysis has always incorporated a detailed and careful review of past allegations of incidents of concern. This included analysis, to the extent possible, of whether there were patterns of concern, in particular arising from trends in the number of allegations of civilian casualties and of damage to key civilian infrastructure. The Court of Appeal broadly endorsed this decision-making process.

The principal issue in the Court of Appeal was whether this analysis needed to go further. In the Court's judgment, the question of whether there was an historic pattern of breaches of IHL was a question which required to be faced. Even if it could not be answered with reasonable confidence for every incident, at least the attempt had to be made. It was because we had not reached findings on whether specific incidents constituted breaches of IHL as part of our assessment of clear risk, under Criterion 2c, that the Court of Appeal concluded that our decision-making process was irrational and therefore unlawful.

To address the Court of Appeal's judgment, we have developed a revised methodology in respect of all allegations which it is assessed are likely to have occurred and to have been caused by fixed wing aircraft, reflecting the factual circumstances that the court proceedings concerned. Each of those allegations has been subject to detailed analysis by reference to the relevant principles of IHL and in the light of all the information and intelligence available. An evaluation has then been made, in respect of each incident, whether it is possible that it constitutes a breach of IHL or whether it is unlikely that it represents a breach. For a number of incidents, as envisaged by the Court of Appeal, there is insufficient information to make this evaluation. Where an incident is assessed as being a "possible" breach, it is regarded – for the purposes of the Criterion 2c analysis – as if it were a breach of IHL. By setting the threshold as "possible" the IHL analysis has captured the widest range of relevant potential IHL breaches, to provide a base from which to assess the prospective risk for Criterion 2c.

The IHL analysis has now been applied to all credible incidents of concern of which we are aware. Some of these incidents have been assessed as "possible" violations of IHL. These have therefore been factored into the overall Criterion 2c Analysis on the basis that they are violations of IHL.

We have sought to determine whether these "violations" are indicative of:

(i) any patterns of non-compliance;

- (ii) a lack of commitment on the part of Saudi Arabia to comply with IHL; and/or
- (iii) a lack of capacity or systemic weaknesses which might give rise to a clear risk of IHL breaches.

We have similarly looked for patterns and trends across the incidents which have been assessed as being unlikely to be breaches of IHL and those for which there is insufficient information to make an assessment.

This analysis has not revealed any such patterns, trends or systemic weaknesses. It is noted, in particular, that the incidents which have been assessed to be possible violations of IHL occurred at different times, in different circumstances and for different reasons. The conclusion is that these are isolated incidents.

I want to emphasise that the IHL analysis is just one part of the Criterion 2c assessment. In re-taking these decisions, I have taken into account the full range of information available to the Government. In the light of all that information and analysis, I have concluded that, notwithstanding the isolated incidents which have been factored into the analysis as historic violations of IHL, Saudi Arabia has a genuine intent and the capacity to comply with IHL.

On that basis, I have assessed that there is not a clear risk that the export of arms and military equipment to Saudi Arabia might be used in the commission of a serious violation of IHL.

Having now re-taken the decisions that were the subject of judicial review on the correct legal basis, as required by the Order of the Court of Appeal of 20 June, it follows that the undertaking that my predecessor gave to the Court – that we would not grant any new licences for the export of arms or military equipment to Saudi Arabia for possible use in Yemen – falls away. The broader commitment that was given to Parliament, relating to licences for Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners, also no longer applies.

The Government will now begin the process of clearing the backlog of licence applications for Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners that has built up since 20 June last year. Each application will, of course, be carefully assessed against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria and a licence would not be granted if to do so would be a breach of the Criteria. It may take some months to clear this backlog.

Finally, as indicated in the statement made to the House on 20 June 2019, we sought permission to appeal to the Supreme Court against the Court of Appeal's judgment. Permission was granted by the Court of Appeal on 9 July 2019. In light of the revised methodology which I have just described, I will now be taking steps to withdraw this appeal.

[Update on Independent Investigation into Export Licences for Saudi Arabia Issued in Breach of Court Undertaking](#)

06 February 2020 | HCWS101 | Liz Truss

I gave a statement to Parliament on 26 September 2019 on matters related to the breaches of the Undertaking given to the Court of Appeal on 20 June 2019 by the then Secretary of State that we would not grant new licences for export to Saudi Arabia of arms and military equipment for possible use in the conflict in Yemen, and the broader commitment to Parliament, also on 20 June 2019, that we would not grant new licences for exports to Saudi Arabia or its Coalition partners which might be used in the conflict in Yemen.

The UK Government is deeply concerned by the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The Government fully supports the peace process led by the UN Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths, and urges the parties to engage constructively with this process. A political settlement is the only way to bring long-term stability to Yemen and to address the worsening humanitarian crisis.

In relation to the breaches, I announced that the Permanent Secretary had commissioned, on my behalf, a full independent investigation to establish the precise circumstances in which these licences were granted, establish whether any other licences have been granted in breach of the Undertaking to the Court or contrary to the Parliamentary Statement, and confirm that procedures are in place so that no further breaches of the Undertaking can occur.

This investigation, led by an independent senior official (the Director General of Policy Group in the Department for Work and Pensions), has now concluded. The report identifies the circumstances in which these licences were granted and assesses the interim procedures which were put in place to ensure no further breaches can occur. It is noted that no further breaches of the Undertaking or the Parliamentary Statement have been identified since I updated the House.

The report notes the steps that have been taken to ensure that there have been no further breaches. In particular, the report states that the **“new processes established address the shortcomings that led to the breaches... The process has a greater iterative and real-time involvement, with the weekly meeting process providing more opportunities for information to be updated and changes in circumstances to be reflected in decision-making. There is greater senior involvement and oversight which should strengthen assurance.”**

The interim process has led to improved, timely information sharing across government and there is now a clear process in place to ensure that any changes in circumstances in the conflict in Yemen are addressed. Further steps have already been taken forward, including increased governance and risk management within the Export Control Joint Unit (ECJU), to meet the issues identified in the report.

I will be considering whether any further action is necessary to ensure the continuance of robust and rigorous operations and assurance processes more widely within ECJU.

I will be placing copies of the report in the Libraries of the House.

## 5.4 Early Day Motions

### [Impact of covid-19 on the humanitarian crisis in Yemen](#)

**EDM 589 (session 2019-21)**

**9 June 2020**

**Kenny MacAskill**

That this House commends the Government for committing £160 million in aid to help fight coronavirus and address the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Yemen; notes the UN-backed collaborative partnership, the International Initiative on covid-19 in Yemen (IICY), to support Yemen's response to coronavirus by channelling specific medical supplies and funding through the WHO to where they are needed most; and calls on the Government to meet with the IICY and agree on ways to better support the delivery of aid and other resources necessary to save lives in Yemen.

### [Covid-19 global ceasefire](#)

**EDM 563 (session 2019-21)**

**4 June 2020**

**Claudia Webbe**

That this House notes United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' recent call for a global ceasefire to combat the rapid spread of COVID-19; further notes that Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab endorsed this call for peace; is concerned that little action has been taken by the UK government to make this a reality; laments the fact that there are currently thousands of British forces in at least 35 countries around the world, including 1,000 in Afghanistan and more than 1,000 in the Middle East including in Iraq and Saudi Arabia; is appalled that Britain remains complicit in the Saudi-led coalition's war in Yemen; recognises that the coronavirus outbreak offers our government a unique opportunity to step away from global conflicts; and calls on the Government to immediately draw up a plan to withdraw British troops from war zones.

### [Continued detention of Bahai in Yemen](#)

**EDM 523 (session 2019-21)**

**2 June 2020**

**Bob Blackman**

That this House notes that over two months have passed since the President of the Houthi Supreme Political Council in Yemen ordered the release of six Baha'is, who have been in long term detention in Sana'a; further notes that this includes Mr Hamed bin Haydara who was under

sentence of death and that President al-Mashat ordered his pardon on 25 March; observes that all six Baha'is are still imprisoned, and that reports confirm that other detainees in their prison facility have contracted covid-19; and urges the Government to make fresh and urgent appeals to the Houthi authorities to expedite the President's orders for release of these six prisoners of conscience.

**Yemen's ongoing humanitarian crisis**

**EDM 368 (session 2019-21)**

**22 April 2020**

**Margaret Ferrier**

That this House is extremely concerned that the world's worst man-made humanitarian crisis could deteriorate further following reports of imminent aid cuts to UN humanitarian programmes in Yemen; notes that more than five years of fighting between the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthi armed group has already resulted in two-thirds of the population being on the brink of starvation and a broken healthcare system; is dismayed that, despite the announcement of a short unilateral ceasefire by the Saudi-led coalition, to help Yemen focus on containing the spread of the coronavirus, fighting has continued, including in the governorates of Marib, al-Jawf, Hajja, Al-Bayda, Sa'ada, Sana'a and Al-Hodeidah; urges all warring parties in Yemen not to exploit the pandemic for military and political gain, and to prioritise the welfare of the Yemeni people; and calls on the Government to work with the UN and the wider international community to back efforts to secure a long-lasting ceasefire, restart peace negotiations, and provide essential humanitarian supplies to all those in need.

**Hamed bin Haydara: death sentence**

**EDM 354 (session 2019-21)**

**21 April 2020**

**Bob Blackman**

That this House notes the decision of the Appeal Court of Yemen in Sana'a on 22nd March; further notes that court upheld a death sentence against Hamed bin Haydara, a member Yemen's Baha'i community; and calls on the UK Government to make urgent representations to the Houthi authorities to release Mr bin Haydara immediately and to release all other prisoners of conscience and those persecuted for their religion or belief.

## 6. Further reading

### House of Commons Library

[Coronavirus in Yemen – an unfolding catastrophe?](#) Commons Library Insight, 15 July 2020

[UK arms exports to Saudi Arabia: Q&A](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper, 10 July 2020

[The situation in Yemen](#), Commons Library Debate Pack, 20 March 2020

[Yemen's fragile peace process](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper, 27 March 2019

[Yemen update autumn 2018](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper, 2 November 2018

### Committee reports

[Yemen: giving peace a chance](#), International Relations Committee, HL 290, 16 February 2019

### Other reports

[UN Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen releases their third report Yemen: A Pandemic of Impunity in a Tortured Land](#)  
United Nations Human Rights Council  
9 September 2020

[Human Rights and Democracy: the 2019 Foreign and Commonwealth Office report](#)  
(Chapter 6.29 -Yemen)  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
16 July 2020

[Rethinking Peace in Yemen](#)  
International Crisis Group  
2 July 2020

[World Report 2020: Yemen \(Events of 2019\)](#)  
Human Rights Watch  
2020

[Yemen the Continuing Tragedy](#)  
All-Party Parliamentary Group for Yemen  
22 May 2018

## Human Rights Organisations websites

[Yemen](#) - Amnesty International

[Yemen](#) - Human Rights Watch

[Yemen in Focus](#) - International Committee of the Red Cross

[Crisis in Yemen](#) - Oxfam

[Yemen](#) - Save the Children

[Yemen](#) – All-Party Parliamentary Group

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