



Control Arms UK  
c/o Oxfam GB,  
Oxfam House,  
John Smith Drive,  
Oxford, OX4 2JY

September 17, 2015

Crispin Blunt MP  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr Blunt,

Further to your interview on Newsnight (10 September 2015), we are writing to you regarding the urgent need for the re-constitution of the Committees on Arms Export Controls (CAEC).

We very much welcome the commitment you made to ensure that the CAEC is convened in the near future, and that its first order of business will be to inquire into arms sales to Saudi Arabia in the context of the use of UK supplied arms and equipment in the war in Yemen.

For many years, the CAEC, and its predecessor the Quadripartite Committee, provided an important source of parliamentary oversight of the UK's export of strategic goods, and supported the UK Government in its responsibility to ensure arms exports are not used for violations of international human rights law (IHRL) or international humanitarian law (IHL). We believe the reconstitution of the CAEC to be an urgent priority and that an inquiry into sales of UK arms, equipment and support services which allow the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) to operate over Yemen will be a matter of significant public interest. The inquiry could usefully examine *inter alia*:

- how the UK risk-assessment process for the granting of new export licences has been implemented since the bombing of Yemen commenced on 25 March 2015;
- what sources of information are being used to inform risk assessments;
- what specific assurances have been given by the Saudi authorities regarding observance of IHL in the Yemen conflict and how such assurances are monitored;
- and precisely how UK civilian and military personnel are involved in maintaining the operational capacity of RSAF planes and supporting the military campaign more broadly (e.g. by providing targeting or tactical advice).

The UK Government has been a strong supporter of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) for many years, and the UK's own system of arms export control, including its model of parliamentary scrutiny, has been a positive model to those countries with less-robust arms export control systems. Now that the ATT has entered into force, it is vital that the UK leads the way in upholding the Treaty in both letter and spirit. Reconvening a robust and well-resourced CAEC is a vital means whereby the UK Parliament can play its part in this effort.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your convenience to discuss issues relating to UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, and will of course be very keen to work closely with the CAEC as it is convened and begins its work.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Goldring, Executive Director, Oxfam GB



Paul Murphy, Director, Saferworld



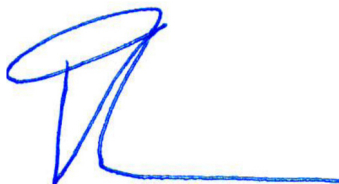
Kate Allen, Director, Amnesty International UK



Helen Close, Omega Foundation



Natalie Samarasinghe, Executive Director, United Nations Association – UK



Thomas Nash, Director, Article 36



Iain Overton, Director of Policy and Investigations,  
Action on Armed Violence