



Foreign &  
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Office



Department  
for International  
Development

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Natalie Samarasinghe  
Executive Director  
United Nations Association - UK  
3 Whitehall Court  
London  
SW1A 2EL

Dear Ms Samarasinghe ,

Thank you for your letter of 26 March about Yemen.

I share your concern about the effects of the conflict on Yemeni civilians. I am acutely aware that during armed conflict, civilians often pay a heavy price. Addressing the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is a key priority for the Foreign Secretary and he discussed this with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia during his recent visit to the UK on 9 March. They also agreed on the importance of reaching a political solution to the crisis and resolved to work closely together, alongside partners including the UN Special Envoy for Yemen to achieve this. I also discussed this issue with Saudi Foreign Minister Al Jubeir on 13 February.

The UK 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. We note the Court of Appeal's decision to grant permission to appeal last year's judgment by the Divisional Court. We will continue to defend the decisions being challenged. We will keep defence exports under careful review to ensure they meet



the rigorous standards of the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria.

In 2017/18 the Government committed £205 million in aid to Yemen, making the UK the third largest humanitarian donor to Yemen, and the second largest to the UN appeal. We prioritised life-saving interventions including food and nutrition support to 1.7 million people and clean water and sanitation for an expected 1.2 million people. On 3 April, I announced an additional £170 million in response to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen for the financial year 2018/2019. This funding will meet the immediate food needs of 2.5 million Yemenis, and comes on top of over £400 million in bilateral support since the conflict began in 2015.

The Government keeps under consideration whether a new UN resolution would support progress towards a political settlement in Yemen. Given the lack of agreement between the parties to the conflict at present, we judge that the best opportunity for progress comes through the appointment of Martin Griffiths as the UN Special Envoy for Yemen. We encourage the parties to return to negotiations and participate constructively in the UN-led political process.

The UN Security Council Presidential Statement (PRST) agreed on 15 March 2018, builds upon the text agreed on 15 June 2017, in its expression of deep concern about the humanitarian situation in Yemen. The statement calls for the parties to agree steps towards a ceasefire; welcomes the new UN Special Envoy for Yemen; and recognises the humanitarian imperative, calling for a vaccination programme and unhindered humanitarian access.

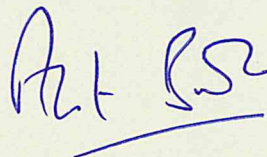
We strongly supported the UN Human Rights Council Resolution on the human rights situation in Yemen in September 2017. It was a single, impactful, consensus resolution. This text is a significant achievement with the potential to make a real difference for Yemeni people. The resolution mandates that a group of eminent international and regional experts conduct an independent investigation into the human rights situation in Yemen. We will work tirelessly at the highest levels to ensure that the resolution is fully implemented.

The UK continues to play a central role in diplomatic efforts to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict in Yemen. Resuming peace talks is the top priority. It is vital that we work towards a rebooting of a UN peace process as a matter of urgency. We welcome and fully support the work of the UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, in trying to achieve a political settlement and commend his efforts to date. By the end of the financial year 2017/18 we had provided £1.68 million to the UN Special Envoy's office to bolster the UN's capacity to facilitate the peace process. We will continue to encourage all parties to engage seriously with the UN's peace proposals.



The imperative of reaching a political solution to the crisis was agreed in the Joint Communique between the UK and Saudi Arabia during the visit of the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia in March this year. The Communique expressed strong support for the UN Special Envoy to Yemen and the UK's and Saudi Arabia's resolve to work together closely to achieve a political solution. We will also continue to address the humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alistair Burt', with a horizontal line drawn underneath the name.

**THE RT HON. ALISTAIR BURT MP**  
**Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa**

