

European Parliament Right to Call for an Arms Embargo against Saudi Arabia

By [CAAT - Campaign Against Arms Trade](#)
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[Campaign Against Arms Trade](#)

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-European parliament has renewed calls for an arms embargo against Saudi forces

-Saudi-led bombardment has inflicted a humanitarian catastrophe on Yemen

-UK has licensed almost £5 billion worth of arms to Saudi Arabia since Yemen war began in March 2015

Earlier today, members of the European Parliament voted overwhelmingly to reaffirm its call for a European-wide embargo against Saudi Arabia, and a political solution to the ongoing conflict in Yemen. The Parliament originally voted to support an arms embargo on February 25, 2016.

The vote is not legally binding, but it sends a strong message to member states that have continued to arm Saudi Arabia despite the humanitarian crisis that has been inflicted on Yemen.

The vote follows recent pledges from the German government to review arms sales to the Saudi regime. Over recent weeks there has also been u-turn from the Spanish government, which in September promised to block the sale of missiles to Saudi Arabia, before reversing its position days later.

UK government statistics show that since the bombing of Yemen began in 2015, the UK has licensed £4.7 billion worth of arms to Saudi Arabia, including:

£2.7 billion worth of ML10 licences (Aircraft, helicopters, drones)

£1.9 billion worth of ML4 licences (Grenades, bombs, missiles, countermeasures)

Andrew Smith of Campaign Against Arms Trade said:

“We are always being told that the European Union stands for human rights, equality and democracy, but European governments have poured billions of pounds worth of arms into one of the worst war zones in the world. These arms sales have had deadly consequences.

The Saudi-led war and blockade has created a terrible humanitarian crisis, and European governments, including the UK, have supported it from day one. Theresa May and other key leaders must end their support for the Saudi regime and its terrible bombardment.”

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