

Political Executions and the Bombing of Yemen. Britain must Stop arming Saudi Arabia

Statement by UK based Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT)

By [Andrew Smith](#)

Global Research, January 04, 2016

Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT)

Region: [Europe](#), [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#), [US NATO](#)

[War Agenda](#)

Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) has called for the UK government to condemn the recent execution of 47 people in Saudi Arabia in the strongest terms and end all arms sales to the regime.

Since taking office in May 2010, David Cameron's governments have overseen [over £5.6 billion of military licences to Saudi Arabia](#). It is by far the largest buyer of UK arms. These licences included fighter jets, tear gas military vehicles and targeting equipment.

The mass execution, which took place on 2 January, was met with widespread protest across the region. It coincided with a breakdown to the ceasefire in Yemen, with the Saudi led coalition restarting its bombing campaign. UK made fighter jets and bombs have been used in the bombardment.

Andrew Smith of Campaign Against Arms Trade said:

"The Saudi regime has a history of locking up bloggers, executing critics and cracking down on dissent. Despite this they can always rely on getting almost uncritical support from countries like the UK that prioritise arms company profits over human rights."

In December 2015 CAAT announced that it is working with lawyers at Leigh Day to explore legal action against the UK government in relation to arms export licences to Saudi Arabia. This followed widespread reports of UK arms being used in violation of international humanitarian law in Yemen.

Andrew continued:

"UK bombs and fighter jets have been central to the destruction of Yemen. As long as Saudi enjoys the political and military support of the most powerful Western nations, then it will continue oppressing its own population and those of neighbouring states."

A recent study by Opinium LLP for CAAT found that 62% of UK adults oppose arms sales to Saudi Arabia, with only 16% supporting them.

Key points:

- David Cameron has overseen £5.6 billion of military licences to Saudi
- CAAT is exploring legal action over use of UK arms where there is a clear risk they might be used to commit war crimes in Yemen
- 62% of UK adults oppose arms sales to Saudi regime, with only 16% supporting them

Andrew Smith is a spokesperson for Campaign Against Arms Trade

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