

UK Arms Sales to Saudi Arabia: UK Should Not be Arming Regimes That Target Journalists

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Campaign Against Arms Trade

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The Turkish authorities have announced that they will search the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul as part of their investigation into the disappearance of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who was last seen going into the embassy.

The Saudi regime has one of the poorest human rights records of any government in the world. [Reporters Without Borders](#) ranks it among the worst countries for journalist freedoms. In 2012, Saudi blogger Raif Badawi was sentenced to 10 years in detention and 10,000 lashes for criticising the regime's human rights record.

Over recent months the Saudi authorities have cracked down on women's rights campaigners and human rights defenders.

The regime is also the world's largest buyers of UK arms, which it has used in the ongoing bombardment of Yemen. The war has killed thousands and created the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.

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:

"The accusations from the Turkish authorities are very serious. The Saudi regime has a proven contempt for its critics and has used its position to crack down on free speech and dissent. Despite the atrocities and abuses, it has always been able to rely on the uncritical political and military support of the UK and other arms dealing governments.

Journalism is fundamental to democracy. It's time for Theresa May and Jeremy Hunt to end the arms sales and call on the regime to end its persecution of journalists and human rights defenders."

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