



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Central Correspondence Unit
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

www.fco.gov.uk

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Gillian Duckworth
Sheffield City Council
Director of Legal and Governance
Town Hall
Sheffield
S1 2HH

Dear Ms Duckworth,

Thank you for your letter of 11 December to the Foreign Secretary, on behalf of the Sheffield City Council about Yemen. The Central Correspondence Unit in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has been asked to reply.

The British Government shares the Council's concern about the effects of the conflict on Yemeni civilians. We are acutely aware that during armed conflict, civilians often pay a heavy price. Addressing the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is a priority for the Government. The Foreign Secretary discussed this with King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia on 12 November.

We take alleged violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) very seriously and when concerns are raised we insist that these are properly investigated. When allegations of IHL breaches have been made against Saudi Arabia, it is important that the Saudis, in the first instance, conduct conclusive investigations. They have the best insight into their own military procedures and will be able to conduct the most thorough investigations. This will also allow the Saudis to understand what went wrong and apply the lessons learnt in the best possible way. This is the standard that we set ourselves and our allies. The Saudi-led Coalition Joint Incidents Assessment Team has released over 100 statements from its investigations into particular incidents of concern.

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 have kept the situation under careful review throughout the conflict in Yemen.

The UK has played a central role in diplomatic efforts to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict in Yemen. Resuming peace talks is the top priority. We welcome and fully support the work of the UN Special Envoy for Yemen in trying to achieve a political settlement and commend his efforts to date. On 13 December, UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths announced an agreement in Stockholm between the Yemeni Government and the Houthis, an important step towards ending the conflict in Yemen. It is vital that the parties act in good faith and take urgent steps to implement these agreements. That same day, the Foreign Secretary attended peace talks to lend his support to the efforts of UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and press for progress on an inclusive political settlement and an end to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. He met the Special Envoy and had constructive discussions with the heads of the Government of Yemen and Houthi delegations.

On Friday 21 December, the United Nations Security Council voted unanimously to adopt Security Council Resolution 2451, a UK-led resolution to bolster the UN Yemen peace process. The new resolution, the first to be passed on the conflict in Yemen since 2016, is designed to build on the momentum generated by UN peace talks in Stockholm last week. The resolution calls for a ceasefire in Hodeidah governorate as agreed in Stockholm and support for the work of the UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths. The resolution will also authorise the UN to take on the monitoring and other tasks it has committed to doing in Stockholm.

In 2018/2019, the UK was the fifth largest donor to Yemen. 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, the British Government 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 £570 million in bilateral support since the conflict began in 2015. On World Food Day (16 October) the UK announced a package of £96.5 million which will help UNICEF tackle malnutrition in Yemen over the coming three years.

The British Government will remain at the forefront of efforts to find a political solution to the conflict. We are committed to using our resources to address the humanitarian crisis.

Yours sincerely,

**Central Correspondence Unit
Foreign and Commonwealth Office**