

UK Arms Trade

At present, [around two thirds](#) of UK arms sales go to the Middle East. Of these, by far the biggest buyer is Saudi Arabia. However, the UK has also licensed large volumes of arms to [Qatar](#), [UAE](#), [Israel](#), [Oman](#) and [Turkey](#). All except Israel appear on the government's list of '[core markets](#)' for arms exports.

UK arms export law is very clear. Licences for military equipment should not be granted if there is a "[clear risk](#)" that a weapon "might" be used in "serious violations" of international humanitarian law. Saudi forces in Yemen have been regularly accused of some very serious breaches of IHL.

The UK government is 'tracking' over [366 possible violations of international humanitarian law in Yemen](#).

In June 2019, the Court of Appeal found that it was 'irrational and therefore unlawful' for the UK Government to have allowed the sale of UK-made arms to Saudi forces for use in Yemen without making at least some assessment as to whether or not past incidents amounted to breaches of International Humanitarian Law. The Government was ordered not to approve any new licences and to retake the decisions on extant licences in a lawful manner.

Value of arms exports to Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is by far the largest buyer of UK arms, and has been for decades. Major fighter jet deals took place [in the 1980s](#), under the Margaret Thatcher government, [in the 1990s](#) under the John Major government, and [in the 2000s](#), under the Tony Blair government. [In 2006](#), shortly before signing his major fighter jet deal, Tony Blair intervened to cancel a Serious Fraud Office investigation into corruption in previous arms deals to Saudi Arabia. At present the Government is in the process of [negotiating a new aircraft deal](#).

The UK has licensed **over [£5.3 billion worth of arms to Saudi Arabia](#) since the bombing began in Yemen in March 2015**. This includes:

- **£2.7 billion worth of ML10 licences (Aircraft, helicopters, drones)**
- **£2.5 billion worth of ML4 licences (Grenades, bombs, missiles, countermeasures)**

There have also been [a number of Open Issue Export Licences](#) approved to Saudi Arabia. These include many of the bombs and missiles that have been used in the war in Yemen. There is no way of knowing how many bombs have been exported or the value of these exports as they are not published, but it does mean that the real total is likely to be significantly higher.

Human cost of war

[The United Nations has called](#) the Yemen humanitarian crisis the worst in the world. Reporting from Save the Children showed that [50,000 children died](#) of preventable causes in 2017 alone.

[Over 60,000 people](#) have been killed as a direct consequence of the war, with many more in the humanitarian catastrophe that has been inflicted as a result. There is no question that atrocities have been committed on all sides of the complicated conflict, although the UN has accused Saudi forces of [killing twice as many civilians](#) as all others.

[1 million people](#) have been displaced in the war. Millions have been left without access to clean water or electricity, and [80% are](#) in need of aid. [A harrowing 2016 report from UNICEF](#) has found that one child is dying every 10 minutes because of malnutrition, diarrhoea and respiratory-tract infections in Yemen, with 400,000 at risk of starvation.

Analysis from Oxfam has found that the cholera outbreak in Yemen, caused by the destruction of infrastructure, is the worst on record, with [over one million suspected cases](#) and thousands being killed.

In April 2019, the UN estimated that if things continued as they were then [230,000 people would die](#) as a result of the conflict by the end of 2019 (this included people killed directly and people killed in the humanitarian crisis that has taken root).

Sites which have been bombed by Saudi forces include [schools](#), [hospitals](#), [homes](#), a [refugee camp](#), a [wedding](#), a [funeral](#), a [market place](#) and [a school bus](#).

Scottish Arms Companies Receiving Funding From Scottish Enterprise

- **Leonardo has received [£7.5 million of public money since 2015](#)**. It is [a partner in the Eurofighter consortium](#), which produces the aircraft being used by Saudi forces in Yemen. While most UK production will be overseen by BAE, Leonardo has a [36% share](#) in the total programme. Its factory in Edinburgh produces [components for F-16 jets](#) that have been used by Turkish forces in Syria.
- **Raytheon received [£50,000 in 2018](#)**. Its factory in Glenrothes produces key components for the Paveway IV missile, which is [being used by Saudi forces in Yemen](#) and has been linked to attacks on civilian targets. Raytheon equipment made in Glenrothes has also been [linked to Israeli bombs](#) used against Palestine.
- **BAE Systems has received [£616,000 since 2007](#)**. It is the biggest arms company in Europe, selling arms to over 100 countries. It produces the Eurofighter jets that are being used by Saudi forces in Yemen. BAE's armoured vehicles were used by Saudi forces in their intervention in Bahrain in 2011 following the uprising.
- **Lockheed Martin has received [£175,000 since 2007](#)**. It is the world's biggest arms company. It has sold arms to [Saudi Arabia](#), [Israel](#), [Bahrain](#) and [Egypt](#) among others. Last year, Saudi-led forces used a Lockheed Martin missile to [bomb a school bus in Yemen](#), killing dozens of children. It is also a major contractor for nuclear weapons in Scotland, which your Government has rightly opposed.
- **Rolls Royce received [£1.3 million in 2017](#)**. It produces military aircraft engines, naval engines and cores for nuclear submarines. Despite arms comprising only 26% of its

total sales, it is still the world's [17th largest arms company](#). It [provides engines for Eurofighter jets](#), which are being used by Saudi forces in Yemen.

- **Chemring has received [£200,000 since 2007](#)**. In 2011 it was revealed that tear gas [used by Egyptian police against Tahir Square demonstrators](#) was manufactured by Chemring. Likewise, in 2014 and 2019 [protesters in Hong Kong](#) were attacked with tear gas grenades produced by Chemring.

**** Take Action To End The Arms Trade ****

Below is a letter that you can copy to the First Minister and to your MSP / MP to urge them to end Scottish Enterprise funding of arms companies. You can find details of your elected representatives and send them a message directly at TheyWorkForYou at this link https://www.mysociety.org/wehelpyou/who-is-your-mp/?gclid=EAlaIqobChMI8uj5jYOG6AIVh8jeCh08pgtJEAAYASAAEgLMjPD_BwE

Dear First Minister /

With Brexit and another referendum on Scottish independence on the horizon, the country is at a crossroads. It is more important than ever that we consider the role that Scotland plays on the world stage.

That is why we are writing to urge you to end Scottish Enterprise funding for arms companies.

We welcome the stance that your SNP colleagues have taken in Westminster, where they have consistently questioned and opposed the UK Government's shameful history of approving military export licences to conflict zones and regimes with poor human rights records.

Nowhere are these concerns more pertinent than in the case of arms sales to the Saudi-led Coalition that is bombing Yemen. UK-made fighter jets, missiles and bombs have played a central role in exacerbating the bombardment of Yemen, which has created the worst humanitarian catastrophe in the world.

This crisis is only possible because of the complicity and support of arms manufacturers and arms-dealing Governments like the UK. Unfortunately, many of these arms companies have also benefited from support and funding from Scottish enterprise.

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Scottish Enterprise has said that this money is being used for business diversification, but [did not provide evidence](#) for this assertion when challenged by a national newspaper in relation to Raytheon.

However, even if all the money is being used for the promotion of civil engineering and non-military projects, it still stands to benefit very profitable companies that actively have actively fuelled war, conflict and instability around the world.

We believe that there are far better ways that this money could be spent. There is a crisis of homelessness in Scotland, and public services are being squeezed. We urge you to set a very welcome and positive precedent by ending this political and institutional support for the arms industry, and instead using that money to provide support for homeless and vulnerable people across Scotland.

Yours sincerely,