Aid Group Urges Europe to Halt Arms to Saudis Bombing Yemen

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
FEB 26, 2016, 10:51 A.M. E.S.T.

CAIRO — An international coalition of 100 aid and rights organizations on Friday urged Western countries to stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia for its extensive air campaign against Iran-backed Shiite rebels in Yemen.

The Control Arms Coalition released a report listing 11 countries — including France, Britain, U.S. and Germany — that it says sold arms such as drones, missiles and bombs worth $25 billion to the kingdom in 2015.

The report says the Saudi-led campaign in Yemen amounts to a "gross violations of human rights and possible war crimes.

The United Nations says the fighting in Yemen has killed more than 6,000 Yemenis since March 2015, and more than 35,000 have been wounded. The fighting pits the widely recognized Yemeni government, backed by Saudi Arabia, against Shiite Yemeni rebels known as Houthis who overran the capital and other Yemeni cities in 2014.

The group's report came ahead of a Geneva meeting of governments that signed the Arms Trade Treaty or ATT, which has the aim of "reducing the human suffering" by imposing restrictions on arms sold to countries that violate international law.

"Control Arms has called on States Parties ... to commit immediately to halting the transfer of weapons to Saudi Arabia and to its allies where these are at serious risk of being used in Yemen," the report said.

"Monday's meeting in Geneva must not fiddle while Yemen burns - governments must address this major breach of the ATT. States supplying weapons to Saudi must stop making huge profits from the suffering of Yemeni families and start applying the strict criteria set down in the ATT to all future arms transfers," it added.

The call came a day after European Union lawmakers called for an EU arms embargo against Saudi Arabia over airstrikes and the naval blockade imposed on Yemen, despite lobbying by the kingdom.
The resolution, which called on the EU's foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini to launch an embargo initiative, assed by 449 votes to 36, with 78 abstentions.

The EU resolution is not binding on Mogherini or the EU member states, but the vote caught the attention of the Saudi government.

Le Monde
Le Parlement européen réclame un embargo sur les ventes d’armes à l’Arabie saoudite

Le Parlement européen a réclamé, jeudi 25 février, un embargo sur les livraisons d’armes des pays de l’Union européenne à l’Arabie saoudite. Cette demande a été adressée à la haute représentante de l’Union européenne pour les affaires étrangères, Federica Mogherini, dans le cadre d’une résolution adoptée par les eurodéputés à une large majorité lors d’une séance plénière à Bruxelles.

Les membres du Parlement européen condamnent ainsi « les frappes aériennes de la coalition menée par l’Arabie et le blocus naval qu’elle a imposé au Yémen, qui ont conduit à des milliers de morts, et ont encore déstabilisé davantage » le pays.

Cette décision fait suite à une demande du groupe des Verts-Alliance libre européenne. Dans un communiqué, les eurodéputés écologistes Eva Joly et Pascal Durand ont exprimé leur satisfaction :

« La demande d’un embargo européen sur la vente d’armes à l’Arabie saoudite est une première historique et reflète l’exaspération de plus en plus d’Européen·nes quant à l’impunité avec laquelle l’Arabie saoudite massacre des milliers de civils au Yémen. »

Par l’intermédiaire d’un autre communiqué, l’organisation humanitaire Action contre la faim s’est aussitôt réjouie que l’UE « reprenne enfin la parole sur cette crise, l’une des plus graves actuellement dans le monde ».

Cette résolution n’a pas de caractère contraignant mais, pour Mike Penrose, directeur général d’Action contre la Faim France, elle représente « un signal à tous les États membres, les invitant à sortir du silence et à ne plus participer au désastre humanitaire en cours au Yémen ».


L’ONU fait part d’« informations inquiétantes »

Le gouvernement reconnu par la communauté internationale siège à Aden, dans le sud du pays, bien que ses dirigeants les plus en vue séjournent souvent à Riyad pour des raisons de sécurité. Le conflit
au Yémen a déjà fait plus de 6 100 morts, pour près de la moitié des civils, et environ 30 000 blessés, selon l'ONU.

Les principaux pays de l'Union européenne ont livré récemment des bombes, équipements ou signé des contrats d'armements, même si les États-Unis restent le premier fournisseur d'armes de l'Arabie saoudite, avec des ventes atteignant 90 milliards de dollars entre 2010 et 2014 selon le Congrès.

Selon l'ONG Avaaz, dont une pétition en ligne a recueilli 750 000 signatures, le Royaume-Uni a ainsi autorisé en 2015 la vente d'avions de combat et de bombes télé-guidées Paveway.

La France a signé en octobre 2015 des contrats avec l'Arabie saoudite dans les secteurs maritime et militaire dont la valeur est estimée à plus de 10 milliards d'euros, précise Avaaz.

L'ONU s'était, quant à elle, inquiétée début janvier de l'usage de bombes à sous-munitions au Yémen par la coalition arabe emmenée par Riyad, affirmant avoir reçu des « informations inquiétantes » sur leur usage durant des attaques contre des zones résidentielles et des bâtiments civils à Sanaa le 6 janvier. Son secrétaire général, Ban Ki-moon, avait mis en garde l'Arabie saoudite, rappelant que cela « pourrait constituer un crime de guerre ».

**BBC**

**Yemen conflict: MEPs call for arms embargo on Saudi Arabia**

25 February 2016

The European Parliament has adopted a resolution calling for an arms embargo on Saudi Arabia over alleged breaches of international law in Yemen. A Saudi-led coalition of nine countries has been heavily criticised over the civilian death toll from a bombing campaign in Yemen. The parliament called on EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini to "launch an initiative aimed at imposing an EU arms embargo".

The motion passed by 449 votes to 36. There were 78 abstentions. Although the vote is not legally binding, lawmakers hope it will pressure EU governments to agree to an embargo, following a petition of 750,000 European citizens. Scottish MEP Alyn Smith, who led the motion, said EU-made weapons were being exported to Saudi Arabia "in breach of international law".

Mr Smyth said: "Having grown up in Saudi Arabia I am sensitive to the realities of the Saudis and appreciate that the Saudis have concerns in their neighbourhood. But our duty is to the civilians in Yemen, and given widespread and very valid concerns over the conduct of the war by Saudi forces, our call for an EU-wide arms embargo is proportionate and necessary."
Anna MacDonald, director of campaign group Control Arms, said the group welcomed "this first step towards preventing European arms from being used to further human suffering in Yemen and elsewhere".

Nearly 6,000 people have been killed since the Saudi-led coalition entered the conflict in March 2015, almost half of them civilians, according to the United Nations.

The US is the largest international supplier of arms to Saudi Arabia. The UK and France are the main European suppliers, while Germany has also licensed arms exports to the kingdom.

**The Telegraph**

**Yemen is becoming the new Syria – and Britain is directly to blame**

By Nawal al-Maghafi

24 Feb 2016

Our support for the brutal Saudi Arabian intervention is creating a lawless wasteland where extremist groups like Isis can thrive

"Tell the world!" the old lady pleaded with me. "We are being slaughtered!"

A few feet away from us, in the heart of the Yemeni capital Sana'a, stood the remains of an apartment complex. It had been hit by two successive airstrikes only minutes earlier.

"They have destroyed our homes, killed our sons...what did we do to them?" the woman cried before collapsing into my arms, her embrace growing tighter as she wept.

Everywhere I went, from the Internally Displaced Persons camps to primary schools that had been turned into makeshift shelters, I was quickly surrounded as soon as people spotted my camera. Everyone offered the same plea: for someone to tell their story to the world.

This broke my heart, because I didn’t have the guts to tell them the simple, blunt truth: that beyond its borders, very few people care about Yemen. Despite horrific human rights abuses, including war crimes committed by all parties to the conflict, being documented for months, this war has not captured the attention of the Western public at anywhere near the level Syria has.

Yemen is under siege. A Saudi-led coalition has been bombing the country on a daily basis for nearly a year. For months now, a battle has been raging in Taiz, where the UN has accused Houthi fighters and their allies of blocking desperately needed humanitarian supplies to the town of 200,000.

Meanwhile, Aden, the only area coalition forces have so far managed to "liberate" (in July last year), is beset by lawlessness. The conflict has spread across the entire country. Today, civilians are suffering
in the fighting tearing Yemen apart, with casualties now topping 8,100, more than 60 per cent as a result of Saudi-led coalition airstrikes. Twenty of Yemen’s 22 governorates are precariously poised on the verge of devastating famine.

And yet, while the Syrian tragedy occupies front pages and news bulletins worldwide, the humanitarian catastrophe engulfing Yemen for the past year continues to meet with indifference. It’s not hard to find news stories about what is happening there, but it is difficult to find a politician who puts it on their agenda or a voter who views it with any concern.

This is hardly surprising. Unlike in Syria, the UK and US are two of the primary causes of the problem in Yemen. Put simply, a coalition of the wealthiest Arab states have joined forces to bomb and starve one of the poorest, with the assistance of two of the world’s richest and most powerful powers.

In my five years of covering Yemen, international headlines have morphed from optimism to despair. In the early weeks of the Arab Spring, everyone was hailing “Yemen: the peaceful revolution”. Today, as the country reckons with its gravest crisis in decades, the main story has become “Yemen: the forgotten war.”

Refugees and IDPs

I’m continuously asked: if the situation is so catastrophic, why haven’t we seen Yemenis fleeing in their millions, like the Syrians? The short answer is that Yemenis are trapped. When the war began on March 26th, all of the country’s exit ports were instantly closed and a blockade imposed on the movement of people as well as goods, both in and out of the country.

Countries that once welcomed Yemenis without a visa, such as Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, have closed their doors. Anyone seeking a visa will soon discover none of these countries have functioning embassies in Yemen today.

Thousands of Yemenis have managed to flee to Djibouti by boat. Many do not survive the extremely perilous journey, while those who do are met with the most tepid of welcomes. With no official refugee camps in the country and hotels charging exorbitant rates, the majority return.

Rampant militarisation

Some have ascribed the international focus on Syria to the presence of Al-Qaeda and Isis in the country. These are headline-grabbing organisations which capture the attention of the Western public. But this is precisely where the situation in Yemen is heading too.

The same short-sighted mistakes that have brought Syria to the brink of collapse are now being repeated in Yemen. For instance, since the start of the conflict, the Saudi-led coalition has been arming the Popular Resistance group in Aden and in Taiz. Although the media keeps calling them "Hadi loyalists" (in reference to the Yemeni president, currently in exile in Saudi Arabia), evidence suggests many of their members are actually from groups such as Isis and AQ.
Indeed, as the war rages on, the country’s infrastructure and institutions are falling apart. Unemployment rates are at a record high, with business at a standstill jobs have disappeared, while almost half the country’s university students have dropped out, offering fertile recruitment opportunities for extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the newly-emerged Islamic State in Yemen.

Today, the country has become a lawless wasteland where militarised extremism is flourishing at an alarming rate, and it won’t be long before this turns into an international headache rather than a local one. After a decade during which Yemen was a main battleground of the US’s War on Terror, regularly held up as a success story in the media, the dark irony of the country’s descent into chaos, and out of the headlines, has not been lost on local observers.

Complicity in war crimes

The media disparities between Syria and Yemen were highlighted again this month. When a Doctors Without Borders (MSF) hospital in Northern Syria was hit by Russian bombs, the uproar in the Western media was deafening, and rightly so. “It is certainly a war crime.” declared Andrew Mitchell, formerly Secretary of State for international Development, on the Today Programme the morning after. “Everyone knew it was an MSF hospital,” he continued, ”and so undoubtedly this goes against international humanitarian law.”

He was right, of course, but I could not help but note that no less than three MSF Yemeni hospitals had been hit by airstrikes in the past few months, one of which the Saudis have already admitted to. There was little coverage of them in the West, let alone outright outrage and condemnation.

Alas, this is not merely about Western indifference but about complicity and collusion. Last October, Britain and the US successfully blocked plans for a UN independent investigation into potential war crimes committed by Saudi Arabia in Yemen. This was a unique opportunity to hold all sides of the conflict accountable for their actions. Instead, Saudi Arabia has been allowed to investigate itself through its own internal commission.

Of course, this is not about denigrating the suffering of Syrians, which has been immense, but to highlight the forgotten, ongoing tragedy in Yemen and how the failure of the media to inform the public of the nature and extent of their government’s role in one of the world’s greatest humanitarian catastrophes today has made it much easier for the US and Britain to pursue their disgraceful support for an indefensible war.

So the next time you hear British and US diplomats express outrage at the heartless carnage in Syria – as they should – remember what they want you to ignore: that there is another nation, and another people, suffering just as much. Except that when it comes to Yemen’s tragedy, both Britain and the US are partly, but directly, to blame.
Las ONG denuncian la inminente venta de cinco corbetas de Navantia a Arabia Saudí

25/01/2016 - 12:01h

- Las ONG denuncian el riesgo claro de su uso en el bloqueo naval saudí de los puertos de Yemen, una violación grave del derecho internacional humanitario
- Alarmadas por las ventas a Arabia Saudí en 2015, piden que la negociación para un nuevo gobierno y un nuevo parlamento aborde la mejora del control y la transparencia del comercio de armas

Los Directores de Amnistía Internacional, FundiPau, Greenpeace y Oxfam Intermón han enviado una carta abierta a la compañía pública española Navantia en la que manifiestan su oposición a la inminente firma de un contrato entre Navantia y Arabia Saudí para la construcción de cinco fragatas del tipo Avante 2200 para la armada saudí.

Las ONG denuncian el riesgo claro de que Arabia Saudí utilice las fragatas en el bloqueo naval al que somete a Yemen desde el 25 de marzo de 2015, cuando inició una devastadora campaña de bombardeos aéreos en Yemen en la que se han cometido graves violaciones del derecho internacional humanitario, incluidos crímenes de guerra.

Violación del derecho internacional en Yemen

El bloqueo naval de Yemen por parte de la coalición saudí es una violación grave del derecho internacional humanitario. Según la ONU, en el conflicto de Yemen han muerto 5.979 personas, más de 28.000 han resultado heridas y hay más de 2,5 millones de personas desplazadas internas. Más de 21 millones de personas necesitan ayuda humanitaria para cubrir sus necesidades básicas, en una crisis exacerbada por el bloqueo naval de Yemen.

Los ataques aéreos lanzados en Yemen por la coalición encabezada por Arabia Saudí, incluidos ataques aéreos contra escuelas, incumplen el derecho internacional humanitario, y la coalición saudí ha usado municiones de racimo.

La exportación de estas fragatas supondría una clara violación del derecho internacional, incluidos el Tratado sobre el Comercio de Armas, la Ley 53/2007 sobre el control del comercio exterior de material de defensa y de doble uso, la Posición Común de la UE que define las normas que rigen el control de las exportaciones de tecnología y equipos militares y los Principios Reguladores de las Transferencias de Armas Convencionales adoptados por la OSCE.

Además, también se violaría la responsabilidad de las empresas de respetar los derechos humanos según el Marco de la ONU “Proteger, Respetar y Remediari” para las Empresas y los Derechos
Humanos y en los Principios Rectores sobre Empresas y Derechos Humanos adoptados por la ONU en 2011.

Venta de armas de España a Arabia Saudí

Según datos oficiales, en el primer semestre de 2015 España autorizó la venta a Arabia Saudí de material de defensa como bombas torpedos y misiles, sistemas de dirección de tiro y aviones por valor de más de 27 millones de euros.

En ese período, las exportaciones a Arabia Saudí, dos aviones de reabastecimiento en vuelo, repuestos y asistencia técnica, ascendieron a más de 447 millones. En relación con las negociaciones para la formación del gobierno español, las ONG solicitan que se aborden medidas para mejorar el control y la transparencia del comercio de armas para evitar la venta de armas para cometer violaciones graves del derecho internacional.

The INDEPENDENT

David Cameron backs 'brilliant' arms deals with Saudi Arabia... hours after Europe says we should ban them

'We've got more work to do in Saudi Arabia'

By Matt Payton 26 February 2016

David Cameron has praised British arms companies that have done business with Saudi Arabia - hours after the European Parliament voted for an arms trade embargo with the Kingdom.

The Prime Minister made the comments during a question and answer session with BAE Systems employees in Preston.

Mr Cameron said he was proud of the "brilliant things" BAE had sold to the Middle Eastern country such as the Eurofighter Typhoon.

On Thursday morning, the European Parliament voted in favour of an EU-wide embargo.

A resolution calling for a ban on all weapons sales to the country was passed by 359 votes to 212. The non-binding motion called on member states to stop selling weapons to the country, which is currently conducting a widely-criticised military operation in neighbouring Yemen marked by high civilian casualties.

The Saudi government has bought £3 billion of UK aircraft, arms and other defence products in 2015.
Smoke rises after a Saudi-led air strike hit an army base in Sanaa, Yemen, last week

"I can see the planes being built right behind me here. We’ve got more work to do in Saudi Arabia," Mr Cameron told the assembled BAE employees.

"The Germans have done a lot of work as well. It is a collaborative project.

"We use the collective skills but also the collaborative muscles of all the governments to try and help make sure we can sell them around the world."

He announced his planned defence of BAE’s international trade: "I'm going to be spending a lot of the next four months talking about this issue but I promise I will not be taking my eye off the ball, making sure the brilliant things you make here at BAE Systems are available and sold all over the world.

"We have some of the toughest rules on defence exports – and rightly so.

"But I think it is absolutely right to get behind companies like this … to safeguard jobs and skills and investment by making sure we can sell these things around the world."

On Wednesday, an Amnesty report said the UK is setting a “dangerous precedent” to the rest of the world by continuing to supply arms to questionable regimes such as Saudi Arabia.

The report criticised the Government’s continuing arms exports to Saudi Arabia in the face of claims that the country may be responsible for atrocities in Yemen.

Prime Minister David Cameron speaking in front a Eurofighter Typhoon to BAE Systems employees

A government spokesperson told the Independent: "This is an issue we take very seriously and we regularly raise human rights concerns with the Saudi government at the highest level.

"The Prime Minister has been clear that we have one of the most robust arms export control regimes in the world.

"All UK export licenses are assessed on a case by case basis and we’re satisfied that our licences for Saudi Arabia are fully in line with our international and legal obligations."

Oliver Sprague from Amnesty International told the Guardian: "The ‘brilliant things’ that David Cameron says BAE sells include massive amounts of weaponry for the Saudi Arabia military, despite Saudi Arabia’s dreadful record in Yemen.

"Thousands of Yemeni civilians have been killed and injured in devastating and indiscriminate Saudi coalition air strikes, and there’s strong evidence that further weapons sales to Saudi Arabia are not just ill-advised but actually illegal."

Shadow Foreign Secretary Hilary Benn has called for a review of arms export licences as a result of the air strikes in Yemen, as they suggest international law has been broken.
SANAA, Yemen (AP) — Saudi-led airstrikes targeting Shiite rebels killed at least 30 people, mostly civilians, when they hit a market area outside the capital on Saturday, Yemeni security officials said.

They said the raid hit the popular market in the Nihm district, killing at least 22 civilians and leaving burned bodies strewn across the area. The officials, who are neutral in a conflict that has split the armed forces, spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief reporters.

The strike comes a day after aid and rights groups urged Western countries to stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia, which is striking the Iran-backed rebels, known as Houthis, to support forces loyal to the internationally recognized government. The Houthis overran the capital, Sanaa, and other Yemeni cities in 2014.

The U.N. says the fighting in Yemen has killed more than 6,000 people since March 2015 and wounded more than 35,000.

The Control Arms Coalition said in a report Friday that 11 countries — including France, Britain, the U.S. and Germany — sold arms such as drones, missiles and bombs worth $25 billion to the Saudis in 2015.

This Monday, governments that signed the Arms Trade Treaty, which has the aim of "reducing the human suffering" by imposing restrictions on arms sold to countries that violate international law, will meet in Geneva.

European Union lawmakers have also called for an EU arms embargo against Saudi Arabia over the airstrikes and naval blockade imposed on Yemen, despite lobbying by the kingdom.
EU parliament votes for embargo on arms sales to Saudi Arabia

MEPs have voted for a European Union-wide arms embargo against Saudi Arabia to protest against the Gulf state’s heavy bombing campaign in Yemen.

The European parliament voted by a large majority for an EU-wide ban on arms sales to the kingdom, citing the “disastrous humanitarian situation” as a result of “Saudi-led military intervention in Yemen”.

The vote does not compel EU member states to act but it does increase pressure on Riyadh, in the wake of criticism from the UN and growing international alarm over civilian casualties in Yemen.

The resolution also turns up the heat on the British government, which has supplied export licences for up to £3bn worth of arms to Saudi Arabia in the last year. The UK has been accused of direct involvement in the bombing campaign through the deployment of UK military personnel to the kingdom.

Saudi Arabia began bombing in Yemen last March to support the Yemeni president, Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, who was under threat from Houthi forces aligned with Iran.

Richard Howitt, the Labour MEP who drafted the key amendment, said: “This is a clear humanitarian appeal to end the bloodshed in Yemen, and call on Saudi Arabia to pursue a political rather than a military solution to the conflict.”

Howitt, who is Labour’s foreign affairs spokesman in Europe, also called on the British government to stop selling weapons to Riyadh. “The UK is one of the biggest suppliers of arms to Saudi Arabia and needs to heed this call, which has been overwhelmingly supported across the political spectrum and by a vast citizen campaign,” he said.

An earlier draft of the resolution that named and criticised the UK and other EU member states, including France, Spain and Germany, was dropped. The final version said “some EU member states” had continued to authorise transfers of weapons to Saudi Arabia since the violence started, in violation of EU rules on arms control.
The motion was passed by 359 votes to 212, as a diverse coalition of Socialists, Liberals, Greens, Leftists and Eurosceptics overcame opposition from the leadership of the two main centre-right groups, including Britain’s Conservatives. A separate resolution calling for a ceasefire in Yemen was supported by a larger number of MEPs.

Under a 2008 code of conduct, EU member states promised not to sell weapons to countries where they might be used “to commit serious violations of international humanitarian law” and undermine regional peace and stability.

The final resolution on arms control criticised the “intensification of airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition”, despite a heavy lobbying campaign from the Gulf state in Brussels.

Howitt, who has had two meetings with Saudi government officials in recent weeks, said this campaign against the resolution showed its significance. “[The Saudis] don’t like it, they are calling it sanctions,” he said. “It is not sanctions, it is an obligation not to sell arms.”

The Saudi ambassador to Brussels, Abdulrahman al-Ahmed, has defended his country’s military intervention, saying that the kingdom had set up a “high-level independent committee” to “assess incidents” and develop “targeting mechanisms”.

In a letter to MEPs ahead of the vote, he said Houthi rebels being bombed by the Saudi-led coalition had bombed civilians, deployed child soldiers and used starvation as a weapon.

Since the start of the conflict about 7,000 people have been killed and more than 35,000 injured. Earlier this year a UN panel investigating the Saudi-led bombing campaign said it had found “widespread and systematic” attacks on civilian targets in violation of international humanitarian law.

Nearly 740,000 people have signed a petition calling for an arms embargo against Saudi Arabia, organised by the campaign group Avaaz.

Alex Wilks of Avaaz said: “For too long Europe has profited from massive arms sales to Riyadh even while the Saudi regime crushed democracy and human rights across the Middle East. Today the European parliament listened to the people and have for the first time stood firmly against Saudi impunity. Now it’s up to capitals to heed this leadership and stop turning a blind eye to massacres in Yemen.”
Saudi Arabia Arms Embargo: EU Passes Resolution To Stop Humanitarian Breaches In Yemen Civil War

The European Parliament adopted a resolution Thursday calling for the introduction of an arms embargo against Saudi Arabia for its military action in Yemen. The EU wants its member states to enforce an embargo until investigators can decide whether forces under control of Riyadh breached humanitarian laws during the yearlong civil war in neighboring Yemen.

"The European Parliament's call for an arms embargo on Saudi Arabia is unprecedented and reflects growing frustration at the conduct of war in Yemen by the Saudi Air Force," said Greens/European Free Alliance foreign affairs spokesman Alyn Smith following the resolution's adoption, according to a Russia Today report. "Saudi Arabia is a top arms client of the U.K. and France, and there is evidence that these weapons have been used in gross violation of international law in Yemen, where thousands of civilians have been killed since the start of the war in March 2015."

Smith added that there are "real grounds to believe that EU-made weapons systems are being exported to Saudi," and he called on the EU's foreign policy high representative, Federica Mogherini, to investigate how an arms embargo might be implemented.

In an attempt to prevent the embargo on Saudi Arabia, the kingdom's representative to the EU, Abdulrahman al-Ahmed, wrote a letter to members of parliament laying out Riyadh's reason for military intervention in Yemen. In the document, which was obtained by the Guardian, al-Ahmed put the blame on Iranian proxies in the region and suggested that it had mostly offered humanitarian aid during the conflict so far. He also said that Saudi Arabia's actions were aligned with Western fears about Islamic extremism in the area.

If the resolution is fully implemented, it will be a blow to some European countries that have a robust defense business with Saudi Arabia. The U.K., for example, has sold $7.8 billion of military hardware since Prime Minister David Cameron came to power in 2010.

Since the start last March of the conflict in Yemen, which saw Sunni and Shia factions backed by Saudi Arabia and Iran, respectively, there have been 6,100 military and civilian deaths.
40 civilians killed in Saudi Arabia air strikes on Yemeni market

Saudi-led air strikes on a market near the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, have killed at least 40 people. The raids were aimed at Shi’ite rebels, but they mainly resulted in the death of civilians, according to security officials.

The strikes hit the Nehm district, northeast of Sanaa on 27 February. "Several Saudi-led airstrikes directly struck people gathered in a crowded market in Nehm district of Sanaa province and killed about 45 civilians while 50 others were injured at the scene," said one resident.

Burned corpses lay strewn across the scene and the rebel-controlled Saba news agency published pictures of children being treated for their injuries. The coalition is yet to comment.

**Multiple air strikes**

Witnesses added that multiple strikes took place in a bid to annihilate both civilians and emergency crews. "The air bombing targeted the popular market in Nehm at first and then returned back to hit the rescuers in double-tap air strikes," a witness told the Chinese state news agency Xinhua.

Yemen, one of poorest countries in the Arab world, is enduring a battle for control between pro-government forces and Houthi rebels.

The northern Shi’ite Muslim rebels forces, known as the Houthis, say they aim to establish a thriving democracy where minorities can co-exist peacefully. But Riyadh accuses Iran of providing military support, in order to secure allied Shi’ite state near Saudia Arabia. The Iranian government denies this.

Saudi Arabia is leading a coalition which supports President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, who was elected in 2012 and is generally backed by the international community. Hadi has been based in the southern port city of Aden since July.

**European arms sales**

More than 6,000 people have been killed by fighting since March 2015, according to the UN.
Campaigners are urging governments to stop the sale of billions of dollars of deadly weapons to Saudi Arabia as it continues to pound Yemen. France, Germany, Italy, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK and the US reported licences and sold more than $25bn (£18bn) of weapons to Saudi Arabia in 2015, according to the Control Arms Coalition. This included drones, bombs, torpedoes, rockets and missiles.

"Thousands of Yemeni civilians have been killed and injured in devastating and indiscriminate Saudi coalition air strikes, and there's strong evidence that further weapons sales to Saudi Arabia are not just ill-advised but actually illegal," Amnesty International UK’s arms controls director, Oliver Sprague said earlier this week.

"[British Prime Minister David] Mr Cameron should stop acting as a cheerleader for BAE’s reckless arms sales and stop the flow of weapons to the Saudi war machine pending the outcome of both a UN inquiry into the bloody conflict in Yemen and the UK’s own review of its arms exports to Saudi Arabia."

EU lawmakers urge Saudi arms embargo
25 February 2016

Brussels (AFP) - European lawmakers on Thursday called for an EU arms embargo against Saudi Arabia over its military campaign in conflict-torn Yemen which has caused "thousands of deaths."

Saudi Arabia told AFP last week it would continue its intervention, launched in March last year against Iran-backed Huthi rebels, until Yemen President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi was fully restored to power.

The European Parliament in a resolution urged EU foreign affairs head Federica Mogherini "to launch an initiative aimed at imposing an EU arms embargo against Saudi Arabia."

MEPs also expressed concern "at the airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition and the naval blockade it has imposed on Yemen, which have led to thousands of deaths (and) further destabilised Yemen," a Parliament statement said. The non-binding resolution, passed by 449 votes to 36, cited Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran as the major players in a conflict which the UN says has
claimed some 6,000 lives, caused hundreds of thousands to flee and destroyed much of the country’s infrastructure.

“A ceasefire that halts attacks against civilians, medical and aid workers, ground fighting and shelling in Yemen is urgently needed to allow life-saving aid to reach the Yemeni people,” the statement said.

Oil-rich Saudi Arabia buys most of its arms from the United States but also has major contracts worth tens of billions with key EU powers, led by Britain and France where there is growing unease at their use in the Yemen fighting.

Since Saudi Arabia and its Sunni Arab allies intervened last year, they have regained control of large swathes of Yemen territory from the rebels.

The European Parliament on Thursday adopted a resolution calling for an arms embargo on Saudi Arabia until alleged breaches of international law in Yemen have been properly investigated.

The parliament called on High Representative Federica Mogherini to “launch an initiative aimed at imposing an EU arms embargo against Saudi Arabia, given the serious allegations of breaches of international humanitarian law by Saudi Arabia in Yemen”.

The vote passed with 359 MEPs supporting it and 212 voting against.

Scottish MEP Alyn Smith, who led the move, said he was “delighted” the parliament passed what he described as an “unprecedented” vote reflecting “growing frustration” with Saudi Arabia’s actions in Yemen.

“It is the actions of the Saudi-led coalition that have brought us here,” Smith said in a statement sent to Middle East Eye.

“There is a clear case to answer and as a lawyer by profession, I believe EU-made weapons systems are being exported to Saudi in breach of international and EU law, given concerns over their use in Yemen.”
Saudi Arabia increased its arms imports by 275 percent in the period between 2011 and 2015, making it one of the world's biggest arms importers, according to a report released this week by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

“We and NGOs want more scrutiny. The humanitarian situation is getting worse, not better [in Yemen]. That message is politically significant in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia must show a lot more consideration for civilian lives in Yemen,” said Smith.

Saudi Arabia launched a coalition of Arab states in March 2015 to carry out air strikes and later a ground intervention in Yemen to push back Houthi rebels who had seized control of the capital Sanaa and forced the government of President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi into exile.

Riyadh is attempting to re-establish Hadi’s control over Yemen and defeat Houthi militiamen the Saudis believe are receiving support from their regional rival Iran.

However, the Saudi-led coalition has faced increasing criticism over its conduct in Yemen, where more than 6,000 people have been killed and 2.5 million displaced since the intervention began.

The UN said in January that the coalition had engaged in “widespread and systematic” targeting of civilians, adding that civilians have been deliberately starved as a war tactic.

While the European Parliament vote on Thursday is not legally binding and it cannot stop EU member states from selling arms to Saudi Arabia, it is sure to cause embarrassment to Saudi Arabia.

The vote was originally scheduled to take place on 4 February. However, reports have suggested it was delayed due to pressure from Saudi diplomats in Brussels.

Abdulrahman al-Ahmed, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the EU, sent a letter to MEPs urging them not to vote for the motion passed on Thursday.

The letter, reported by the Guardian, blames Iran for Saudi Arabia’s intervention in Yemen and says the military operation has been a humanitarian one.

“Saudi Arabia has also answered the call from the West to take a greater role in combating terrorist instability throughout the Middle East and the consequences of our not intervening in Yemen’s conflict would have been far worse than the west could as yet imagine,” the ambassador wrote.

Scottish MEP Smith, who grew up in Saudi Arabia, said he appreciates “that the Saudis have concerns in their neighbourhood,” but he stressed that Yemeni civilians are his primary concern.

“Our duty is to the civilians in Yemen and given widespread and very valid concerns over the conduct of the war by Saudi forces, our call for an EU-wide arms embargo is proportionate and necessary.”
The European Parliament on Thursday adopted a resolution calling for an arms embargo on Saudi Arabia until alleged breaches of international law in Yemen have been properly investigated.

The parliament called on High Representative Federica Mogherini to “launch an initiative aimed at imposing an EU arms embargo against Saudi Arabia, given the serious allegations of breaches of international humanitarian law by Saudi Arabia in Yemen”.

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Cameron brags of ‘brilliant’ UK arms trade as EU embargoes Saudi

European ministers have embarrassed David Cameron by voting to impose an arms embargo on Saudi Arabia on the same day the British prime minister praised the UK for selling “brilliant” arms to the country.

Speaking at a BAE Systems factory in Preston, the prime minister said the UK had pushed the sale of Eurofighter Typhoons to countries in the Middle East, including Oman and Saudi Arabia.

His comments come as a report by Amnesty International reveals that EU and US arms trading provided Saudi Arabia with arms worth billions of dollars in 2015. The Saudis are engaged in a military offensive against Houthi rebels in Yemen. The latest figures from Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) suggest some 6,400 civilians have been killed or injured in the conflict.

Cameron’s speech in Preston came at the same time the European Parliament voted to impose an EU-wide ban on arms exports to Saudi Arabia, citing criticism from the UN of its bombing in Yemen.

Asked at the talks how he was helping to export the planes, Cameron said: “With the Typhoon there is an alliance of countries: the Italians, Germans and ourselves. We spend a lot of time trying to work out who is best placed to win these export orders. We’ve got hopefully good news coming from Kuwait. The Italians have been doing a lot of work there. The British have been working very hard in Oman.”

The vote will not force EU members to comply with the ban, but will force the government to examine its relationship with Saudi Arabia.

In the last year the British government has sold £3 billion (US$4.18 billion) worth of arms and military kit to the Gulf state, as well as providing training to Saudi forces.

A report released by Amnesty International on Friday called the ongoing trade with Saudi Arabia “truly sickening,” and urged governments to attend meetings in Geneva on Monday to discuss the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

The report names the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the US as having issued licenses for arms to Saudi Arabia worth more than £18 billion in 2015.

The arms sold include drones, bombs, torpedoes, rockets and missiles, which have been used by Saudi Arabia and its allies for gross violations of human rights and possible war crimes during aerial and ground attacks in Yemen, the campaign group said.
تقرير دولي يكشف استخدام الأسلحة المصدرة للسعودية في استهداف المدنيين باليمن

2016-8-10

المؤتمرت

تقرير دولي يكشف استخدام الأسلحة المصدرة للسعودية في استهداف المدنيين باليمن

تقرير تقرير لـ (الانطلاق من أجل مكافحة الأسلحة) عن أداة لا يمكن دفعها تؤكد استخدام الأسلحة التي صدرتها كل من فرنسا وألمانيا وإيطاليا والبلدان الأوروبية الأخرى.

وينشر الانطلاق أن صنف الأسلحة التي ذهبت إلى السعودية قدرت بـ25 مليار دولار وتضمنت طائرات بـ3 طائرات وقذائف وطائرات وصاروخ موغية وغير موغية.

وذكر التقرير، والذي نشره التقرير أن صنف الأسلحة التي ذهبت إلى السعودية قدرت بـ25 مليار دولار وتضمنت طائرات بـ3 طائرات وقذائف وطائرات وصاروخ موغية وغير موغية.

وأكد أن هذه التشكيلة من الأسلحة تستخدمها السعودية وحلفائها من الدول حاليًا في ارتقاء المهاجرين جزية لحقوق الإنسان وقبلما ارتقاء جرائم حرب أثناء

وأشار التقرير من أجل مكافحة الأسلحة في تقريبه إلى مقتل واصابة نحو 35 ألف شخص في أقل من عام واحد من الحدود السعودي على اليمن إلى جانب أكثر

من جنابها تذكر منظمة العفو الدولية إن جميع الدول المصدرة للسلاح التي أوردها التقرير هي من الدول الأطراف في معاهدة تجارة الأسلحة أو من الدول

الموقع عليها.

وأضافت "بأنها معايدة تهدف إلى تقليل حجم المخاطرة البشرية من خلال وضع قواعد عالمية جديدة تتضمن تجارة الأسلحة وتتمثل نقلها إذا كان من الممكن أن

تستخدم في ارتقاء جرائم حرب أو إذا رحبت مخاطر باختيار استخدامها في ارتقاء مخاطرات لأحكام القانون الدولي".

وأشارت منظمة العفو إلى أن حكومات دول مختلفة ستشارك في الاجتماع الاستثنائي لمؤتمر الدول الأطراف في معاهدة تجارة الأسلحة في جنيف يوم الاثنين

القادم لمناقشة أمور تنفيذ المعاهدة والخوض في غي انشاقة القوى المستقلة المتعلقة بتنشيط حالة المعاهدة أبسطاً.

وفي هذا الصدد أهاب انطلاق مكافحة الأسلحة بالنظام الذي أوردته ضمن نقاشاتها الأوضاع الخطيرة في اليمن، وبيع الأسلحة إلى السعودية وبيان هما الآن تنتميان من

المنظمات التي تعهدت بها بشأن التقييم من حجم المخاطرة البشرية من خلال قيمهما بزيادة السعودية بعض أكثر الأسلحة فكما في العالم. إنه لمجرت فعلاً.

ومثلت مديرة انطلاق ماكوترون: "قامت حكومتنا المملكة المتحدة وفرنسا ركب الدول التي سعت إلى إقرار معاهدة تجارة الأسلحة وها ما الآن تنتميان من

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Control Arms Director Anna Macdonald said: "Governments such as the UK and France were leaders in seeking to secure an ATT – and now they are undermining the commitments they made to reduce human suffering by supplying Saudi Arabia with some of the deadliest weapons in the world. It’s truly sickening."

تقرير دولي يكشف استخدام الأسلحة المصدرة للسعودية في استهداف المدنيين باليمن

2016-8-10
وشددت مديرة الائتلاف على أنه "يتبع على المشاركون في اجتماع جنيف عدم التكلم وإضاعة الوقت بينما يحرق اليمن بنيران النزاع ويجب على الحكومات أن تتصدى لهذا الخرق الحاصل لأحكام معاهدة تجارة الأسلحة".

وأضافت كما "يتبع على الدول التي تزود السعودية بالأسلحة أن تتوقف عن جني الأرباح على حساب معاناة العائلات اليمنية وعلى أنها أن تسرع بتقديم معايير صارمة تستند عليها معاهدة تجارة الأسلحة بشأن جميع عمليات نقل الأسلحة مستقبلاً.

وقتر تقرير الائتلاف إجمالي قيمة الرسوم الصادرة بتصدير الأسلحة والمبيعات المعالنة عنها من السلاح إلى السعودية بأكثر من 25 مليار دولار في العام الماضي 2015م. موضحًا أن الدول الأطراف في المعاهدة تكفلت بتوريد ما قيمته 9.4 مليار دولار من هذا السلاح فيما يرجح أن يكون الرقم الحقيقي أكبر من ذلك بكثير.

كما أشار تقرير الائتلاف من أجل ماكافحة الأسلحة إلى أن الكثير من الدول لم يتم بالإبلاغ بشكل كامل عن جميع الرسوم التي أصدرتها لنقل الأسلحة خلال عامي 2014 و2015م.

وتتص بالمعاهدة تجارة الأسلحة على وجب تقييم جميع صفقات السلاح استنادًا إلى معايير صارمة بما في ذلك تقييم مخاطر استخدامها في ارتكاب انتهاكات خطيرة.

وتشرف المعاهدة على الدول التي تنقل شحنات السلاح أن تتوقف لديها معلومات معقولة بما يكفي لتكون معرفة مسبقة بأن الأسلحة سوف تستخدم في ارتكاب جرائم جرائم حرب، أو يوجد مخاطر جوهرية باحتمال أن يشكل تصديرها خرقًا لأي من تلك المعايير المراعية، بما يفرض حينها وقف إتمام الصفقة أو نقل الشحنة.