

29 April 2016

Our reference: MIN/96585/2016

Rehman Chishti MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

*R. Chishti*

Thank you for your letter of 15 April on behalf of your constituents, about Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

As I stated in my evidence to the International Development Committee on 27 January, the situation in Yemen remains of deep concern to the UK Government. We all agree on the need for urgent action to prevent a further deterioration and to provide life-saving assistance to the Yemeni population. The UK has played a leadership role within the international community, in particular with regards to humanitarian and commercial shipping access to all of Yemen's sea ports. The Department for International Development (DFID) has so far announced £85 million of humanitarian assistance to Yemen to support those affected by the crisis, at least 1.3 million people, including those forced to flee their homes. This is delivered through UN agencies and non-governmental organisations and provides emergency shelter, healthcare, water and food assistance, as well as supporting UN work to co-ordinate the humanitarian response.

We fully and actively support the UN's efforts to bring about a political solution. The Foreign Secretary has publically welcomed the cessation of hostilities that began on 10 April we are strongly encouraging all parties to respect it. UN-led peace talks between the Yemeni parties began in Kuwait on 21 April. The Foreign Secretary said on their commencement "I urge all those around the table to come together to find a way to end the conflict, address the humanitarian situation, and allow the return of Yemen's legitimate government".

Peace talks are an important first step. As with all negotiations of this kind, they will not be quick or easy and a lot of tough discussions will need to be had. Both sides will need to engage constructively and in good faith to overcome obstacles and find a political solution to end the conflict. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Department for International Development and the Ministry of Defence will continue to work closely to improve the humanitarian situation and support peace and stability in Yemen.


In terms of our arms sales to Saudi Arabia the UK operates one of the most robust arms export control regimes in the world. The Government can and does respond to

changing circumstances and is able to review licences, suspend or revoke when required. On the basis of the information currently available, we are satisfied that all extant UK licences for the export of arms to Saudi Arabia are compliant with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. All available relevant information, including reports from Non-Governmental Organisations, our overseas network and the media is taken into account as part of the assessment and this is kept under regular review. We know that some UK supplied weapons are being used in Yemen. It is important that they are used legally and we monitor this very carefully.

As you mention, on 10 March the Parliamentary Committees on Arms Export Controls launched an inquiry into the use of UK-manufactured weapons in the conflict in Yemen. We have provided written evidence to the inquiry and several Ministers, including myself, are scheduled to appear on 27 April to provide oral evidence. We look forward to this opportunity to further discuss our arms export policy to Saudi Arabia with Parliament.

We share your desire to bring this conflict and dire humanitarian crisis to an end; Yemen will remain a priority for the UK Government.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large loop and a short horizontal stroke at the bottom left.

**TOBIAS ELLWOOD MP**  
**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State**



**Rehman Chishti MP**

*Member of Parliament for Gillingham and Rainham*

House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

Tel: 020 7219 7075

Email: rehman.chishti.mp@parliament.uk

Tobias Ellswood MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London  
Sw1A 2AH

RECEIVED

20 APR 2016

15 April 2016

Dear Tobias

I have recently received correspondence from two of my constituents in relation to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

I would therefore appreciate it if you can address the position of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in relation to the Yemeni Civil War, and clarify what support is being provided to Yemen to assist with their humanitarian needs.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours ever

Rehman Chishti MP

MINISTERIAL  
SUPPORT UNIT  
20 APR 2016  
DEPT: AP10  
REF: MIN/96585/2016  
DUE: 29/4/2016

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: 26 March 2016 12:00  
To: CHISHTI, Rehman <[rehman.chishti.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:rehman.chishti.mp@parliament.uk)>  
Subject: Concern for Yemen's children

Dear Mr Chishti,

I am emailing you to express my concern about the continuing situation in Yemen. Over the last year, fighting has escalated and the lives of millions of children and their families have been devastated: 856 children have been killed, 1,249 injured and millions more traumatised by a war that has raged between a Saudi Arabia-led coalition backing the government in exile against Houthi opposition forces.

The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate and more than 80% of the population now require humanitarian assistance, including nearly 10 million children. According to the UN, the level of food insecurity remains at the highest level the country has seen and this is likely to deteriorate further unless the conflict ends. Furthermore, the levels of insecurity children are faced with every day are chronic because schools and hospitals are regularly attacked, hundreds are closed and close to 2.5 million people have been displaced.

The UN has attributed a disproportionate number of child casualties, as well as damage to civilian infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals, to coalition airstrikes. There are credible allegations of violations of international law by all sides. In some cases, these may amount to war crimes. Disappointingly, the UK government has continued to provide Saudi Arabia with arms, advisors and other military support.

I urge you to pressure the Foreign Office into supporting the establishment of an international, independent investigation into alleged breaches of international law and urge the Government to suspend the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia while they risk being used to carry out such breaches.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 31 March 2016 17:42  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: An unhappy anniversary for Yemen's children

**Dear** [REDACTED]

Please see below my home address. Thank you for your email.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



**"For the Triumph of Evil, it is Only Necessary That Good Men Do Nothing". Edmund Burke.**

—Original Message—

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 31 March 2016 14:51  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** An unhappy anniversary for Yemen's children

**Dear** [REDACTED]

Many thanks for your email below. Kelly is pleased to send you a response to your message, however in order to do so I must request your full postal address. This is in order to follow strict parliamentary protocols in corresponding and logging incoming mail from constituents whom Kelly represents.

If you could respond to this email with your details I would be very grateful.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Researcher for Kelly Tolhurst MP  
Member of Parliament for Rochester and Strood House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA**

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 22 March 2016 18:48

To: TOLHURST, Kelly <kelly.tolhurst.mp@parliament.uk>

Subject: Response Required: An unhappy anniversary for Yemen's children

Dear Ms Tolhurst,

It is now a year since fighting escalated in Yemen. A brutal conflict has ensued, devastating the lives of millions of children and their families.

In just one year, 856 children have been killed, 1,249 injured and millions more traumatised by a war that has raged between a Saudi Arabia-led coalition backing the government in exile against Houthi opposition forces.

The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate as months of fighting drag on. More than 80% of the population now require humanitarian assistance, including nearly 10 million children. According to the UN, the level of food insecurity remains at the highest level the country has seen and this is likely to deteriorate further unless the conflict ends.

On top of this, the levels of insecurity children are faced with every day are immense. Schools and hospitals are regularly attacked, hundreds are closed and close to 2.5 million people have been displaced.

The UN has attributed a disproportionate amount of child casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals, to coalition airstrikes. There are credible allegations of violations of international law by all sides. In some cases, these may amount to war crimes.

Far from using its influence to protect Yemeni children, the UK government has supported the coalition's military intervention by providing Saudi Arabia with arms, advisors and other military support.

I strongly believe that the UK government's international reputation is now at stake.

As my voice in Parliament, I would urge you to pressure the Foreign Office into supporting the establishment of an international, independent investigation into alleged breaches of international law. And urge the Government to suspend the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia while they risk being used to carry out such breaches.

I look forward to hearing from you and reading the government's response to my concerns.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]