

EU must impose an arms embargo on Saudi Arabia



30 November 2017

The Greens/EFA group is calling on the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, to launch an initiative in the Foreign Affairs Council to impose an arms embargo against Saudi Arabia. The European Parliament will hold a debate this afternoon on the situation in Yemen, with a vote on a motion for a resolution tomorrow.

Bodil Valero was rapporteur for the European Parliament's report on Arms Exports, which previously called on High Representative Mogherini to launch an embargo (1). She comments:

"It is a scandal that EU member states continue to provide arms and expertise to Saudi Arabia in the war against Yemen. High Representative Mogherini should urgently launch an initiative to impose an EU arms embargo against Saudi Arabia. As chairwomen of the Foreign Affairs Council, we urge Mogherini to formally put the item of an embargo on the agenda of their next meeting. EU countries cannot continue to be party to the horrible suffering being caused in Yemen.

"Saudi Arabia should immediately stop the sea, land and air blockade of Yemen and allow full access for humanitarian aid to all parts of Yemen."

The UK is one of the EU countries still exporting high volumes of arms to Saudi Arabia, where Prime Minister Theresa May is currently visiting (2). British MEP Molly Scott Cato adds:

"While Theresa May will no doubt pay lip service to the tragedy facing the people of Yemen during her trip to Saudi Arabia, these words will mean nothing so long as the UK continues to sell billions of euros worth of weapons to Saudi Arabia each year.

"There are signs that war crimes are being committed in Yemen on a grave scale. We support the collection of evidence for the criminal prosecution of those committing such crimes and UN sanctions against individuals obstructing delivery of humanitarian assistance."

Notes

(1) See our press release from 12 September for more information:
<https://www.greens-efa.eu/en/article/press/keine-waffen-nach-saudi-arabien/>

(2) According to figures obtained by The Guardian, UK military sales to Saudi Arabia were over £1.1bn in the first half of 2017:
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/24/uk-sales-of-arms-and-military-e>

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