

# Labour challenges Chancellor to use Budget to reverse Conservatives' abysmal house-building record

Ahead of the Budget tomorrow, Labour has revealed that no new 'starter homes' have been built in three years, despite the Conservatives' promise to build 200,000 of them.

'Starter homes' are a flagship Conservative commitment to first-time buyers, first announced in December 2014. In the Conservatives' 2015 manifesto, they promised to build 200,000 starter homes but none have so far been built.

In addition to the lack of progress on building starter homes, analysis from Labour shows that the number of new low-cost homes to buy has halved since 2010. There are now 58,000 fewer affordable homes for first-time buyers than if building levels had continued at the level left by Labour.

Labour is challenging the Chancellor to use tomorrow's Budget to reverse this abysmal record on house-building and to ensure that promised homes are actually built.

**John Healey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Housing, said:**

"If not built homes, Conservative Ministers would have fixed our housing crisis. Three years after they pledged a big new programme of 'starter homes' for first-time buyers, not a single one has been built.

"Meanwhile, the number of home-owners under 45 has fallen by 904,000 since 2010 and the number of low-cost homes to buy has halved.

"The Chancellor must use the Budget to reverse this abysmal record and ensure that the homes they pledge are actually built. No more broken promises.

"The next Labour government will build 100,000 genuinely affordable homes to rent and buy a year, and help first-time buyers with first-dibs on new homes for local

people, a new generation of discounted FirstBuy Homes, and a cut in stamp duty on their first home.”

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## **Theresa May's weak leadership has left our country increasingly isolated and ignored – Thornberry**

**Emily Thornberry MP, Shadow Foreign Secretary**, commenting on the UK losing its place on the International Court of Justice for the first time in its 71 year history, said:

“While we congratulate our friends in India on maintaining their place on the International Court of Justice, it remains a shocking indictment of Britain's declining international standing that, for the first time in the history of the court, it will now be without a British judge. Theresa May and Boris Johnson like to proclaim their dream of a ‘Global Britain’, but here in the real world, her weak leadership and his repeated gaffes have left our country increasingly isolated and ignored.

“Only a Labour Government, which will restore values and principles to our foreign policy, and build bridges with our international partners, will allow us to recover our global influence, and re-take our rightful place as a leading player at the United Nations.”

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## **John McDonnell comment on latest Public Sector Finance figures**

**John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor**, commenting

on Public Sector Finance figures published today by the ONS, which show borrowing has increased by £500 million to £8 billion from last year, and that

£147.8 billion has been added to the national debt since October 2016, said:

“These figures are a reminder of the continued failure of both Philip Hammond and Theresa May over these past seven

years. The deficit has still not been eliminated as they promised it would be by 2015, and the national debt continues to grow. The rise in the Government's deficit over October shows once again that seven years of Tory spending cuts have caused pain and misery for millions with little to show for it.

"It further highlights why it is so vital that we see a change of course in the Budget tomorrow, halting the growing emergency in our public services and ending their failed austerity policies.

"The next Labour government will set out a serious plan for the public finances with strategic investment underpinned by our Fiscal Credibility Rule, to help build a high-wage, high-skill economy for the many not the few."

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## [Jonathan Ashworth responds to the decision to relocate the European Medicines Agency away from London](#)

**Jonathan**

**Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary**, responding to the European Council's decision to relocate the European Medicines Agency from London to Amsterdam, said:

"This decision is extremely disappointing. Labour has been clear all along that Britain should seek to maintain membership of the European Medicines Agency.

"Not only will this relocation see the loss of almost 900 jobs from London, but Britain's reputation as a world leader in the life sciences is under serious threat and patients will likely suffer from longer waits for new medicines.

"Ministers must urgently reassure the House that the UK will not become a second-tier market as a result of their reckless handling of Brexit, and that the best possible deal for patients and staff remains at the forefront of negotiations."

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# Corbyn demands Government acts to end suffering of the Yemeni people

**Jeremy Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party**, has today (Monday) written to Prime Minister Theresa May demanding her Government acts to end the conflict in Yemen.

The letter follows repeated reports from the United Nations (UN) and other agencies about the scale of the “devastation and destruction in Yemen”, with millions of Yemenis at risk of death as aid cannot be delivered.

Jeremy Corbyn argues that the “UK has a crucial role to play” and calls for the UK to end support for the Saudi-led coalition’s conduct in this war. He urges the Government to suspend arms sales to Saudi Arabia, and call for an immediate ceasefire through the UN to enable the negotiation of a long-term political peace.

## **Text of the letter**

Dear Prime Minister

In light of continuing reports from the United Nations and others of the devastation and destruction in Yemen, I am writing to express deep concern about your Government’s role in supporting the Saudi-led coalition in prolonging and escalating the humanitarian crisis and impress on the need for you to call for an immediate ceasefire.

At least 10,000 people have been killed since the conflict started in 2014 and 7 million people are in extreme hunger. Food shortages and the cholera outbreak are a direct result of the continuing blockade of Yemen by the US and UK backed Saudi-led coalition.

The Red Cross has confirmed that the cities of Taiz, Saads and Hodeidah have now run out of clean water and sanitation due to the deadly blockade putting 1 million people at risk of death by famine and waterborne diseases.

The head of the World Food Program too warned today that millions of Yemenis are at risk of death as aid deliveries cannot get to those in need.

This weekend’s warnings from multiple UN agencies starkly state the urgent need to lift the Saudi blockade, in order to stop this already catastrophic humanitarian crisis becoming one of the worst combinations of famine and disease since the 1980s, with millions of innocent people, especially children, at risk of death.

The UK has a crucial role to play in that decision, given the Government’s strong support for all Saudi military action to date, its continued authorisation of arms sales for use in the conflict, and its year-long failure to bring forward a UN resolution aimed at halting the conflict.

In August, former International Development Secretary Priti Patel, announced her department was launching 'a new offensive' against Yemen's man-made cholera outbreak. For many, this incoherence in foreign and development policy is beyond belief. It cannot be aid packages from the UK one day, and missiles the next. With this in mind, I urge your Government to suspend the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia, pending the outcome of an independent, international UN-led investigation of potential violations of international humanitarian law from both sides of the conflict.

Given your Government's role as 'pen holder' for drafting a fresh UN resolution intended to secure a ceasefire in Yemen, and enabling both the negotiation of a long-term political peace, why has there been a delay in calling for a ceasefire process?

Whilst the immediate priority should be humanitarian assistance to Yemen, it is time the Government takes immediate steps to play its part in ending the suffering of the Yemeni people, ends its support of the Saudi coalition's conduct in the war and take appropriate action to bring the conflict to a peaceful, negotiated resolution.

Given the public interest in these issues, I will be making this letter public.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Corbyn