

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

[George Freeman has caught essence of Tories in two word phrase: lazy privilege](#)

Jon Trickett MP, Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office, responding to the news that Theresa May's policy chief, George Freeman, has resigned from his role in No 10, said:

"For a man who once said that the 'raison d' être' of his role in No.10 was to face the challenge of renewal in office, his resignation speaks volumes on the current state of the Tories in Government.

"He has caught the essence of the Conservative Party in a two word phrase: lazy privilege. It tells you all that's wrong with Theresa May's Government because they are working for the few, while Labour is working for the many."

[The Chancellor is living on another planet – Jon Trickett MP](#)

Jon Trickett MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office, responding to Phillip Hammond on the Marr show saying there are no unemployed people, said:

"The Chancellor is living on another planet. If the person in charge of the country's finances doesn't know, or chooses to ignore, the fact that nearly 1.5 million people are unemployed, and almost a million people are on zero-hours contracts, then he is clearly losing a grip on reality.

"The Tories have become even more out of touch and are now so inwards looking that they have no clue of the experiences of ordinary people suffering from seven years of Tory austerity."

[The Conservatives have no plan to fix the housing crisis – John Healey MP](#)

John Healey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Housing, responding to comments made on housing in the Chancellor's interview with the Sunday Times, said:

"After seven years in Government, it's clear the Conservatives have no plan to fix the housing crisis and still can't see that their policy failures are making the crisis worse.

"More big targets, small changes in funding and yet another review into the housing market fall far short of what is needed.

"The hard truth is that housebuilding is still below the level it was before the global financial crisis and affordable housebuilding has fallen off a cliff, with the lowest number of new social rented homes built last year since records began.

"Rather than more small-scale tinkering, the Chancellor should back Labour's long-term plan to invest to build the homes we need, help first-time buyers and give private renters the protections they need."

[Sue Hayman responds to reports Government are considering new taxes on plastic waste](#)

Sue Hayman MP, Shadow Secretary for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, responding to reports that the Government are considering new taxes on plastic waste, said:

"This looks like another U-turn by a Conservative Government in chaos. While we support initiatives to decrease the use of non-recyclable materials, the slump in recycling figures and significant increase in litter and dumped rubbish under this Government requires a far more strategic approach.

"One of the hallmarks of Tory austerity Britain is the very visible rubbish and fly tipping blighting our communities due to unprecedented cuts to cash-strapped councils and the lack of clear overarching objectives and policies from central Government.

"Ministers must now explain how they intend to invest in developing new packaging materials as well as enhancing recycling processes and infrastructures to deal with this further up the supply chain.

"Despite their warm words on the environment, the Government chose to vote against crucial environmental amendments to the EU Withdrawal Bill last week. There is still an opportunity for the Government to get behind the remainder of Labour's amendments to the EU Withdrawal Bill to ensure all environmental law is fully transferred to the UK after Brexit."