

Open Letter to the Executive Members of the Federal Security Council and the Representatives of the Parties Conducting Coalition Negotiations

Berlin, 16.11.2021

40 Development, peace and human rights policy, and humanitarian aid organizations demand: Comprehensive ban on arms exports to the Yemen military coalition.

Dear executive members of the Federal Security Council, dear representatives of the parties leading coalition negotiations,

we, the undersigned organizations, welcome the outgoing German government's commitment as a humanitarian donor and note its efforts as a political actor to peacefully resolve the armed conflict in Yemen.

Against this backdrop, we welcome the decision in December 2020 to revoke in principle arms export licenses already granted to Saudi Arabia and to approve in principle no new applications for arms exports to Saudi Arabia until December 31, 2021. We also welcome the extension of the understanding on joint programs related to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates until the end of 2021.

We, the undersigned organizations, once again call for the arms export and licensing ban on Saudi Arabia to be extended and for further effective steps to be taken to stop the supply of arms for the war in Yemen. This is because we once again criticize the fact that the previous decision only applies to Saudi Arabia and also allows for exceptions. In addition, we criticize the fact that the understanding for European Community programs regarding Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates also allows for exceptions. The fact that these exceptions are being used was confirmed by the German government in response to parliamentary questions: from October 2020 to September 2021, the German government approved arms exports to Saudi Arabia worth around 33 million euros under individual export licenses for joint programs.^{1 2}

War has been raging in Yemen for almost seven years now. The military coalition led by Saudi Arabia, which includes the United Arab Emirates, is one of the warring parties. The fighting has directly cost the lives of over 100,000 people, and another 130,000 people indirectly.³ Over four million people have been forced to flee within the country,⁴ including at least 1.6 million children.⁵ The humanitarian situation in the country, exacerbated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, continues to be dramatic, with over 21 million Yemenis*, including over 11 million children, in need of humanitarian assistance. Currently, Yemen is facing its worst food crisis since fighting escalated in March 2015, and humanitarian access to vulnerable populations is severely limited in many cases.

¹ <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/19/19232.pdf#P.29920> , question 41

² <https://www.bmwi.de/Redaktion/DE/Parlamentarische-Anfragen/2021/09/9-81.pdf?blob=publicationFile&v=4>

³ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1078972>

⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/unhcr-yemen-2021-country-operational-plan>

⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/yemen-crisis>

In September 2021, the United Nations Group of Experts on Yemen (GEE Yemen) accused all warring parties of blatant violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and called on all countries to stop supplying arms and military support to the parties to the conflict.⁶

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The European Parliament, in its recent resolution on the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, again called on Member States to stop arms exports to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, "which only make them complicit in perpetuating the conflict and prolonging the suffering of the Yemeni people," and called for "targeted sanctions against officials in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates that have been involved in alleged war crimes."⁸

Against this backdrop and, given the clear risk that human rights and international humanitarian law will also be violated in Yemen with German military equipment, arms exports to countries in the military coalition in Yemen are in blatant contradiction to the Political Principles of the German government as well as national, European, and international legal obligations, such as the Common Position of the European Union and the International Arms Trade Treaty.⁹

Therefore, we call on you, as members of the caretaker or future federal government:

- Impose a comprehensive and indefinite arms export ban on all members of the Saudi Arabia-led military coalition in Yemen for as long as they are involved in the armed conflict in Yemen or there is a risk that German military equipment will also contribute to human rights and international law violations in Yemen. This export ban must not include any exceptions, such as for licenses already granted, re-exports, European cooperation or component deliveries within the framework of European joint projects.
- Building on the European Parliament resolution, advocate for an EU arms embargo against all members of the Saudi Arabia-led military coalition in Yemen.

Yours sincerely

⁶https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session48/Documents/A_HRC_48_20_AdvanceEditedVersion.docx

⁷ The fact that the UN Human Rights Council voted against the extension of GEE Yemen's mandate on October 7, 2021, is a major setback for the victims of the conflict and the investigation and processing of war crimes committed.

⁸ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0012_EN.html Point 32

⁹ At least Point III, No. 9 of the Political Principles of the Federal Government, Section 6 of the War Weapons Control Act, Article 2, Paragraph 2, Criterion 2, c of the EU Common Position on Arms Exports and Articles 6 and 7 of the International Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)



Nationale Organisationen und Bündnisse

Aktion Aufschrei – Stoppt den Waffenhandel!
Aktion gegen den Hunger
Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden (AGDF)
Aktiv für Frieden Bad Kreunach
Ärzte der Welt e.V.
Berliner Initiative Legt den Leo an die Kette
Bremer Friedensforum
Bund für soziale Verteidigung
Bundesvereinigung Opfer der NS-Militärjustiz
Church and Peace e.V.
Dachverband der Kritischen Aktionärinnen und Aktionäre
Deutsche Franziskanerprovinz
Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft – Vereinigte KriegsdienstgegnerInnen (DFG-VK)
Deutsche Lepra- und Tuberkulosehilfe e. V. (DAHW)
Deutsche Sektion der Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
Deutscher Caritasverband e.V.
Essener Friedensforum
European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights e.V. (ECCHR)
Frauennetzwerk für Frieden e.V.
Friedensausschuss der Deutschen Jahresversammlung der Religiösen Gesellschaft der Freunde (Quäker)
Friedensfestival Berlin e.V.
Friedensglockengesellschaft Berlin e.V.
Friedensgruppe der Evangelischen Französisch-Reformierten Gemeinde Frankfurt/Main
Internationale Ärzt*innen für die Verhütung des Atomkrieges/Ärzt*innen in sozialer Verantwortung e.V (IPPNW)
Lebenshaus Schwäbische Alb - Gemeinschaft für soziale Gerechtigkeit, Frieden und Ökologie e.V.
NaturFreunde Deutschlands
Netzwerk am Turm e.V. Bad Kreuznach
Ohne Rüstung Leben
Osnabrücker Friedensinitiative OFRI
Oxfam Deutschland
pax christi – Deutsche Sektion e.V.
Plattform Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung
RüstungsInformationsBüro
terre des hommes Deutschland e.V.
urgewald
Zentrum Oekumene

Internationale Organisationen

ACAT France - ACTION DES CHRÉTIENS POUR L'ABOLITION DE LA TORTURE
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
PAX (Pax for Peace Netherlands)
Salam For Yemen