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Green Party: We need to talk about arms sales



Green Party

6 June 2017

*** Jonathan Bartley: “The ‘special relationship’ with Saudi Arabia has to end”**

*** Event details: 2.30pm, ExCel London, One Western Gateway, Royal Victoria Dock, London E16 1XL**

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, will give a speech in London about arms sales calling on the new Prime Minister to suspend sales to Saudi Arabia on their first day in post.

Bartley will say that Britain’s foreign policy cannot be divorced from counter-terrorism and that the UK must end its special relationship with Saudi Arabia – a country which turns a “blind eye while weapons flow freely to D’aesh”.

Saudi Arabia has been accused of causing the vast majority of civilian deaths in the conflict in Yemen, including with weapons sold to the Saudi dictatorship by the UK Government [1]. Since March 2015, when Saudi Arabia intervened in the civil war in Yemen, the UK has licensed £3.3bn worth of arms to the Saudi regime [2].

In a speech to supporters outside ExCel London, where the world’s biggest arms fair DSEI is held, Bartley will ask why no one is holding the Prime Minister to account for the human rights abuses of the Saudi regime, and their regimes complicity with Islamic extremism.

With the UK currently the second biggest arms dealer in the world [3], Bartley will also promise that Green MPs elected this week will campaign to suspend all arms sales to countries which are violating human rights.

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, is expected to say:

“The British Government’s cosy relationship with Riyadh must end. The Saudi Regime is a human rights abuser and turns a blind eye while weapons flow into the hand of terrorists. In the wake of the horrific and despicable acts of terrorism we have seen in the last three months we need to have an honest conversation about foreign policy and realise it cannot be divorced from counter-terrorism. It is a national shame that the UK sells arms to a regime that looks away while weapons flow freely to D’aesh.

“I appeal to the leader that takes the keys to Number 10 on Friday to spend their first day in office making an attempt to begin righting this atrocity

by immediately suspending all arms sales to Saudi Arabia. And I make voters this promise: Green MPs elected this week will always campaign for the UK to suspend arms sales to countries which are violating human rights – this is the absolute minimum requirement of a confident and caring nation.”

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/23/uk-in-denial-over-saudi-arms-sales-being-used-in-yemen-claims-oxfam>
2. <https://www.caat.org.uk/media/press-releases/2017-04-03>
3. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/britain-is-now-the-second-biggest-arms-dealer-in-the-world-a7225351.html>

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[European Development Days focus on “Investing in Development” – #EDD17](#)

Europe’s leading forum on international cooperation and development promises to be the biggest ever with some 7,000 participants expected. The event’s debates, panels, and special events will provide insights into the most pressing development challenges facing the world, and various approaches to dealing with these challenges.

On this occasion, President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude **Juncker** stressed: *“Europe is the smallest continent, but it is also the richest. And as the richest, we have to help others not so fortunate in the lottery of birth to catch up. Development aid is a word of the past. It is about partnership, not aid. And it is time we invested more in that partnership.”*

A key moment of the European Development Days will be the signature of the European Consensus on Development, a strategic document, outlining the future of European development policy. For the first time, the Consensus will apply in its entirety to all EU Institutions and all Member States, who are committed to work more closely together.

Neven **Mimica**, Commissioner in charge of International Cooperation and Development commented: *The European Union is not only the biggest contributor to global development – we also strive to be the best at it. With the new Consensus on Development that will be signed at the beginning of the European Development Days, we are aligning our action on European level to the internationally agreed 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and we are*

committed to work even more closely together. This way, we want to make a giant leap forward towards the eradication of poverty and truly achieve sustainable development everywhere on this planet”.

During the European Development Days, discussions will bring together Heads of State or Government, business leaders and stakeholders to debate and share new insights into sustainability, inclusivity, peace and prosperity, focusing on the roles of youth, women and the private sector in development cooperation

Among the high level speakers of the event are Her Majesty **Mathilde**, Queen of the Belgians, Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations Amina **Mohammed**, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund Christine **Lagarde** and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Muhammad **Yunus**. From the European Commission, the debate will be joined by President Jean-Claude **Juncker**, together with High Representative/Vice President Federica **Mogherini**, Vice President Andrus **Ansip**, as well as Commissioners Neven **Mimica**, Margrethe **Vestager**, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, and Tibor **Navracsics**.

In parallel, this year’s EU-African Business Forum will be held on 7 June, focussing on the key theme “Investing in job creation”. Sixteen bright and talented Young Leaders from around the world will join panels with policy makers and world leaders to share their own ideas and experiences. Furthermore, the Lorenzo Natali Media Prize will award outstanding journalists in the fields of development and poverty eradication around the world. A web release presenting the winners [will be published](#) on 7 June at 19:30.

A full cultural programme featuring international artists, musicians and filmmakers will complement the event, while the Global Village, with 76 stands, will bring together international stakeholders to share projects.

For more information

<https://www.eudevdays.eu/>