

Greens call for end to UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia ahead of G20 summit



Green Party

20 November 2020

The Green Party of England and Wales and the Scottish Greens have condemned UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia ahead of the G20 leaders' summit hosted by Riyadh this weekend.

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party of England and Wales, said:

"The UK government is trying to sell itself as 'Global Britain', yet the best it seems to be able to come up with is selling arms to human rights abusers.

"It is a stain on our national conscience that rather than dedicating our resources to solving the world's biggest crises, this government prefers to brag about developing and selling weapons that are used to harm thousands of innocent civilians.

"It is time the UK government stopped its dirty deals with potential war criminals and showed some true leadership on the world stage by properly addressing climate change and the global pandemic."

Earlier this year the UK government announced it was to resume selling arms to Saudi Arabia, despite these exports having been found to be illegal because they were used to commit war crimes in Yemen. [1]

Recent figures from Oxfam suggest the UK licensed \$5.4 billion of arms sales to Saudi Arabia between 2015 and 2020 – more than four times the amount of aid it has given to Yemen in the same period.[2]

Following the UK's announcement of a further £16.5bn in defence spending yesterday [Thursday 19 November], the Greens have warned the move will fail to address the country's biggest security threats and should instead be spent on tackling the climate, health and economic emergencies we are currently facing. [3]

Ross Greer MSP, Scottish Greens international affairs spokesperson, said:

"Compared to the meagre £4bn spent on a speculative climate wish list, the whopping £16.5bn Boris Johnson is throwing at defence spending is absolutely

ridiculous in itself, never mind the fact he announced it on the eve on a G20 summit hosted by a regime that uses British-made bombs to kill children.

“This spending imbalance needs to be redressed to tackle the real threat to our survival, the climate emergency. Instead of throwing more money at weapons and arms dealers, why not create quality manufacturing jobs in the industries which actually benefit our country and the world, like the domestic supply chain for the wind farms that will be going up at a rapid rate off our coasts?”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/britain-arms-sell-saudi-arabia-military-exports-a9605636.html>

2

https://oxfamapps.org/media/press_release/g20-arms-exports-to-saudi-arabia-worth-three-times-aid-to-yemen-since-2015/

3

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2020/11/19/greens-warn-defence-budget-increase-fails-to-address-biggest-threats-to-our-security/>

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