

I welcome today's announcement that the stress and worry that this inquiry has caused to service personnel and veterans will soon be brought to an end- Griffith

Nia Griffith MP, Labour's Shadow Defence Secretary, commenting on the decision to close down The Iraq Historic Allegations Team, said:

"I welcome today's announcement that the stress and worry that this inquiry has caused to service personnel and veterans will soon be brought to an end.

"I completely condemn the spurious and untrue allegations that have been levelled against service members and veterans. Labour has long said that anyone facing investigation should be properly supported by the Government.

"It is now important that the inquiry's work is completed promptly and properly in order to eliminate any risk of these vexatious claims arising again in future."

Ends

Government must show caution and concern about the way the Saudi campaign is being conducted – Thornberry

Emily Thornberry, Shadow Foreign Secretary, responding to today's revelations regarding arms exports to Saudi Arabia, said:

"We have discovered today that, even after the bombing of the funeral hall in Sana'a and the concerns of Liam Fox's department about the

risk

that British weapons were being used in breach of International Humanitarian Law, Boris Johnson gave his personal reassurance that the Saudi-led coalition was improving its targeting processes and ensuring that any incidents where non-military targets had been bombed were being properly investigated.

"According to the independent

Yemen Data Project, in the 55 days between Boris Johnson writing his letter and

the end of 2016, Saudi forces bombed 60 residential sites in Yemen, including houses, markets and refugee camps. At this time of heightening humanitarian crisis, they bombed 46 sites of economic infrastructure, including farms, water

tanks and food trucks, and 48 sites of physical infrastructure, including roads, bridges and ports. They also managed to bomb three schools and a university. Not a single one of these 160 incidents has yet been investigated by the Saudi authorities. If this is what Boris Johnson calls the Saudis 'improving processes and...taking action to address failures', then I would sorely hate to see the opposite.

"It should not be left to the

courts to rule whether the export licences for these arms sales should have been granted. It should be for this Government to show some long-overdue caution and concern about the way the Saudi campaign is being conducted, the devastating humanitarian crisis that campaign is helping to cause, and the blatant failure to ensure any proper, independent investigation of these alleged crimes against international law."

Ends

Shadow Cabinet appointments

Ian Lavery and Andrew Gwynne are appointed joint National Elections and Campaign Coordinators for the Labour Party.

Jon Trickett is appointed Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office and will remain Shadow Lord President of the Council.

Ends

An arbitrary cap on the number of children the Government will support is not only cruel, but is bad policy – Abrahams

Debbie

Abrahams MP, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, commenting on a letter from the Social Security Advisory Committee addressing the Government's policy to limit child tax credits to two children, said:

"The Social Security Advisory Committee is right to raise very serious concerns over Tory plans to limit child tax credits to two children.

"An arbitrary cap on the number of children the Government will support is not only cruel, but is bad policy.

"Requiring survivors of rape to justify themselves in this way constitutes an unacceptable extension by the Government into deeply sensitive areas of women's lives.

"That's why Labour is calling on the Tories to scrap this pernicious policy before it takes effect in April."

ENDS

The Government must urgently explain this ranking and confirm that jobs, livelihoods, and speedy access to new drugs will be at the centre of its

Brexit plans – Blomfield

Paul

Blomfield MP, Labour's Shadow Brexit Minister, commenting on the leaked Government report dividing British industries into high, medium and low priority in the Brexit negotiations, said:

“Hard working people, the back bone of our manufacturing sector, will be the losers in this Tory harsh Brexit.

“Pharmaceuticals is ranked as ‘high priority’ yet the Health Secretary has confirmed we will likely pull out of the European Medicines Agency, threatening access to drugs for patients and thousands of jobs.

“Steel construction is ranked as ‘low priority’ – a shocking indictment of a Government that claims to understand the importance of manufacturing.

“The Government must urgently explain this ranking and confirm that jobs, livelihoods, and speedy access to new drugs will be at the centre of its Brexit plans.”