



## Craig Whittaker MP

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### **Response to EDM124: Parliamentary Scrutiny of UK Arms Export Controls – July 2017**

Thank you for contacting me about the Committee on Export and Arms Control.

The Committee on Export and Arms Control can only be re-established when the constituent Committees have themselves been established. This has not yet taken place in the new Parliament. When the Committee was last in place the active Committees were Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Defence, Foreign Affairs and International Development. It should also be noted that during the last Parliament the Committee ceased to meet as the Foreign Affairs Select Committee withdrew from the Committee on Arms Control due a series of unauthorised leaks.

I am reassured that the Government takes seriously its legal obligations as regards the licensing of arms for export to Saudi Arabia and elsewhere. The UK has one of the most rigorous licensing regimes in the world.

Each application is considered on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, taking into account the precise nature of the equipment and the identity and track record of the recipient. The Government has consistently said it does not, and will not, issue licences where it judges that the proposed export would provoke or prolong internal conflicts, or where there is a clear risk it might be used to facilitate internal repression or be used aggressively against another country. I have always fully supported this stance.

Saudi Arabia has publicly stated that it is investigating reports of alleged violations of International Humanitarian Law. This is an important process and the UK is fully behind thorough investigations into all allegations of violations of International Law. Finding a political solution to the conflict in Yemen is the best way to bring long-term stability and peace talks are a top priority.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP