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Caroline Lucas MP  
House of Commons  
London  
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*Dear Caroline,*

Thank you for your email of 14 December to the Prime Minister about Yemen and the United Nations (UN). I am replying as the Minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East.

I share your concern about the effects of the conflict on Yemeni civilians. I am acutely aware that during armed conflict, civilians often pay a heavy price. Addressing the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is a key priority for the Foreign Secretary. He discussed this with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia on 25 January, and I discussed this issue with Saudi Foreign Minister Al Jubeir on 13 February. It is also the subject of regular Ministerial-level conversations with our regional and international partners.

From the Prime Minister down, the Government played a leading role in providing Saudi Arabia with the security reassurances it needed so that port access could resume. The Foreign Secretary discussed the issue several times with Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman. He also spoke with other regional counterparts and the Secretary-General of the UN. The Prime Minister, International Development Secretary and Chancellor all raised the importance of addressing the humanitarian crisis during recent visits to Saudi Arabia. We welcomed the announcement on 20 December by the Saudi-led Coalition that Hodeidah port would be open for both humanitarian and commercial supplies, including fuel and food. Since the



announcement, over 35 ships supplying food or fuel have berthed at Hodeidah or Saleef.

We also welcome the announcement on 22 January by the Saudi-led Coalition of an initiative to address the humanitarian situation in Yemen. Improving humanitarian access to all of Yemen is key to alleviating the continuing crisis, as recognised by the most recent meeting of the Quad hosted by the Foreign Secretary on 23 January. It is important that all parties, including the Houthis, take steps to ensure unhindered access for supplies and personnel. Continued access for commercial supplies including food and fuel through the ports of Hodeidah and Saleef is critical to ensuring that the Yemeni people get the supplies they so desperately need. We continue to raise regularly the importance of the humanitarian situation.

In 2017/18 we are committing £205 million in aid to Yemen, making us the third largest humanitarian donor to Yemen, and the second largest to the UN appeal. We are prioritising life-saving interventions including food and nutrition support to 1.7 million people, and clean water and sanitation for an expected 1.2 million people. The UK has also taken the lead in lobbying across the international community. We urge all parties to the conflict to ensure rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and we secure funds for the international humanitarian response to the crisis. As pen-holder at the UN, the UK proposed and coordinated a UN Security Council Presidential Statement (PRST) which was agreed on 15 June 2017. The PRST expresses deep concern about the humanitarian situation in Yemen, exacerbated by the rapid spread of cholera. The statement calls for: an end to the fighting; a return to UN-led peace talks; and recognition of the importance of unhindered humanitarian access.

The Government keeps under consideration whether a new UN resolution would support progress towards a political settlement in Yemen. Given the lack of agreement between the parties at present we judge that the best opportunity for progress comes through the appointment of Martin Griffiths as the new UN Special Envoy for Yemen, which we welcome. We encourage the parties to return to negotiations and participate constructively in the UN-led political process.

The UK has played a central role in diplomatic efforts to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict in Yemen. Resuming peace talks is the top priority. We welcome and fully support the work of UN Special Envoy in trying to achieve a political settlement and commend his efforts to date. We are providing over £1 million to the UN Special Envoy's office to bolster the UN's capacity to facilitate the peace process. We will continue to encourage all parties to engage seriously with the UN's peace proposals.

The UK takes its arms export responsibilities very seriously and operates one of the most robust arms export control regimes in the world. All export licence applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, taking account of all relevant factors at the time of the



application. We have kept the situation under careful review throughout the conflict in Yemen and continue to monitor it closely. We welcome the divisional court's judgment dismissing the claim by the Campaign Against Arms Trade for a judicial review of decisions on arms exports to Saudi Arabia for possible use in the conflict in Yemen.

The British Government will remain at the forefront of efforts to find a political solution to the conflict and is committed to using our resources to address the humanitarian crisis.

*Yours ever*

*Alistair*

**THE RT HON. ALISTAIR BURT MP**  
**Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa**

