

The Right Honourable Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A2

4 August 2019

Re: Pending Review of Canada's Export of Light Armoured Vehicles to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

The undersigned, representing a cross-section of Canadian civil society organizations focused on arms controls, human rights, international security, humanitarian assistance and the protection of civilians in conflict, are writing to follow up on a letter that was sent you five months ago, outlining ongoing concerns about Canada's export of Light Armoured Vehicles (LAVs) to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. For your ease of reference, we enclose a copy of the 4 March 2019 letter.

We are disappointed that neither yourself, nor the Minister of Foreign Affairs, nor the Minister of International Trade Diversification has responded to the concerns outlined in our letter. We are furthermore disappointed that, after more than nine months since you announced a review of military exports to Saudi Arabia, your government has yet to release the outcome of this review. No update with respect to the progress of the review has been offered, bringing the sincerity of the effort into question.

Today, we reiterate our call for Canada to exercise its sovereign authority and suspend the transfer of LAVs to Saudi Arabia. We wish to bring your attention to three important developments which, in our view, underscore the need to put an end to these exports immediately.

First, as you are aware, Canada has passed Bill C-47 and deposited its instrument of accession to join the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Bill C-47 enters into force and Canada becomes bound by the treaty next month. We congratulate your government on having taken these important steps, which will meaningfully contribute to the improved regulation of the arms industry. However, Canada's good-faith efforts to implement Article 7 of the ATT will be highly questionable if exports continue after these legal requirements become binding as a matter of both domestic and international law.

Second, according to Global Affairs Canada's *2018 Exports of Military Goods* report, 127 full system "Armoured Combat Vehicles" were exported to Saudi Arabia last year alone, while media reports have indicated that the full order is for 742 vehicles (down from an original order of 928). In light of the rapid pace at which the LAVs are being exported, further delays to completing the above-mentioned review and your government's ultimate decision will substantially undermine

their meaningfulness. We are deeply concerned that meaningful action will come too late – that is, once the transfers are complete or nearly completed.

Finally, the situation surrounding the conflict in Yemen continues to deteriorate and war has set back Yemen’s development by 20 years. In his briefing to the United Nations Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Yemen of 18 July 2019, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock indicated that the conditions “for most people in Yemen are getting worse,” and that “if the current trajectory continues, we should all expect they will continue to get worse.” The worsening conflict dynamics, and the ongoing risk that Canadian arms could be used to perpetrate serious violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law, are such that Canada must join the swelling ranks of countries which have ended their military transfers to Saudi Arabia.

It has been more than nine months since your government announced that it would be reviewing military exports to Saudi Arabia, and six months since you told Canadians that your government was trying to see if there is a way of “no longer exporting these vehicles to Saudi Arabia.” In the lead up to the 2019 Federal Election, and in light of the United Kingdom’s recent decision to suspend weapons exports to Saudi Arabia and of repeated votes in the United States Congress in favor of banning arms exports to Saudi Arabia, Canadians are entitled to know the outcome of the government review, and a clear answer with respect to your government’s position on the export of LAVs from Canada to Saudi Arabia. We look forward to your response, Prime Minister, and urge that it include an immediate end to these transfers.

Sincerely,

Action contre la faim Canada
Amnesty International Canada (English branch)
Amnistie internationale Canada francophone
Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East
Group of 78
International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group
Médecins du Monde Canada
Oxfam Canada
Oxfam-Québec
Project Ploughshares
Rideau Institute
Save the Children Canada

cc: Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. James Carr, Minister of International Trade Diversification