

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

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Organization: Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada
Item: Item 10 General Debate
Date: 26 September 2019
Speaker: Paul Scambler

Oral Statement to the 42nd Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), NGO in special consultative status

Mr. President,

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada thanks the High Commissioner for her report on implementation of technical assistance provided to the National Commission of Inquiry on Yemen.¹ The High Commissioner affirms that “[t]he conflict has turned Yemen into the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with the population trapped in a relentless armed conflict and other forms of violence, which entail serious human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law.”²

The recent report of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen notes the “lack of international action to hold parties to the conflict accountable” and calls on all States to refrain from providing arms that could be used in the conflict.³

Some States, including Denmark, the Netherlands, and Finland, have announced bans or suspensions of arms exports to Saudi Arabia.⁴ Germany recently extended its temporary ban on the export of weapons to Saudi Arabia to 31 March 2020.⁵ Despite overwhelming evidence of war crimes against civilians in Yemen, other States, including States Parties to the UN Arms Trade Treaty,⁶ such as France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, and Canada, continue arms exports to Saudi Arabia or have yet to impose a ban. We ask the Council to call on all Council members, all State Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, and other States, to immediately ban the export of arms to all parties to the conflict in Yemen and close any loopholes in existing bans or suspensions.

Thank you.

¹ Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Implementation of technical assistance provided to the National Commission of Inquiry to investigate allegations of violations and abuses committed by all parties to the conflict in Yemen, A/HRC/42/33, 9 September 2019, https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/42/33.

² *Ibid* at para. 45.

³ See: Press Release, Group of International and Regional Eminent Experts on Yemen, 3 September 2019. Online at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=24937&LangID=E> and, Situation of human rights in Yemen, including violations and abuses since September 2014, Report of the Group of Eminent

International, A/HRC/42/17, 17 August 2019, at para. 112 (b). Online at https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A_HRC_39_43_EN.pdf.

⁴ Giovanna Maletta, Legal challenges to EU member states' arms exports to Saudi Arabia: Current status and potential implications, Stockholm Institute of Peace Research (SIPRI), 28 June 2019, <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-background/2019/legal-challenges-eu-member-states-arms-exports-saudi-arabia-current-status-and-potential>.

⁵ See: *Germany extends ban on Saudi arms sales*, Washington Post, 18 September 2019. Online at https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/germany-extends-ban-on-saudi-arms-sales/2019/09/18/4e7c279c-da1f-11e9-a1a5-162b8a9c9ca2_story.html;

***Germany extends ban on arms sales to Saudi for another 6 months*, Press TV, 19 September 2019. Online at <https://www.presstv.com/Detail/2019/09/19/606551/Saudi-arabia-arms-exports-germany-Khashoggi-ban>;**
Saudi-Arabien: Streit um Waffenexporte flammt wieder auf, Tagesschau.de, 17 September 2019, <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/ruestungsexporte-saudi-arabien-bundesregierung-101.html>

⁶ Arms Trade Treaty, New York, 2 April 2013, in force 24 December 2014, <https://unoda-web.s3-accelerate.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/English7.pdf>.