

Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP

10 Downing Street
London
SW1 2AA

Britain Should End Its Military Collaboration with Saudi Arabia

Dear Prime Minister,

As trade union leaders we are shocked by the government's decision to provide yet more military support to Saudi Arabia. Britain should not collaborate with a military that has repeatedly violated international law and has been central to creating one of the world's worst humanitarian crises in Yemen.

Providing military support to Saudi Arabia inflames the war started by the US and Israel against Iran in February, which has expanded across the region. Contrary to the government's statements, the more this war expands, the more expensive our bills will get. The only way out is a diplomatic settlement to the regional war.

Saudi Arabia has intervened in Yemen for 11 years, with devastating results. Throughout this war, the Saudi-led coalition has repeatedly targeted civilians, breaking international law, while its air and sea blockade helped cause a humanitarian crisis that left 377,000 people dead by 2021.ⁱ Britain has supported this war throughout – supplying Saudi Arabia with aircraft, missiles and on-the-ground maintenance to keep its fighter jets in the sky. Earlier this year, the government approved a £468 million weapons sale to Saudi Arabia, mostly composed of missiles.ⁱⁱ These actions have fuelled a brutal war that has left Yemen in ruins. Providing military support to Saudi Arabia as the US-Iran war extends to Yemen only exacerbates regional conflict and takes us further from the diplomatic settlement that the world urgently needs.

As the war expands, our members are paying the price. Inflation rose again in August, driven by petrol prices. Energy bills will rise again in October, perhaps exceeding £2100 for the average household from January.ⁱⁱⁱ Escalating this war will make our bills more expensive. If the government is serious about tackling the cost of living crisis, it must get serious about diplomacy.

First, we ask you to urgently end Britain's military support for Saudi Arabia. Second, we ask you to end the UK's wider involvement in the Iran war, by revoking support for US air strikes launched from RAF bases. These are essential steps for a cost-of-living government to take.

Yours sincerely,

Andrea Egan, General Secretary, UNISON

Daniel Kebede, General Secretary, National Education Union

Dave Ward, General Secretary, Communication Workers Union

Eddie Dempsey, General Secretary, National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers

Fran Heathcote, General Secretary, Public and Commercial Services Union

Jo Grady, General Secretary, University and College Union

Paul W. Fleming, General Secretary, Equity

Maryam Eslamdoust, General Secretary, Transport Salaried Staffs' Association

Sarah Woolley, General Secretary, Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union

Steve Wright, General Secretary, Fire Brigades Union

ⁱ “Yemen UNCT Annual Report”, United Nations Yemen, 2022. Available [here](#).

ⁱⁱ “Strategic export controls: licensing statistics: 1 January to 31 March 2026”, UK Government, 2026. Available [here](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Eamon Farhat, “Energy Bills Forecast to Jump 25%, Bloomberg Analysis Finds”, *Bloomberg UK*, 15 September 2026. Available [here](#).