

Question for written answer E-004817/2018
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
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Subject: VP/HR - Arms exports to Saudi Arabia

The Spanish Minister of Defence, Margarita Robles, announced this week that Spain will go ahead with the sale of 400 laser-guided bombs to Saudi Arabia, after the deal was halted amid concerns over the Saudi role in the war in Yemen¹.

While several human rights groups²³ have denounced Western arms sales to Saudi Arabia in a war which has killed more than 10 000 people and left 8.4 million on the brink of famine⁴, the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Josep Borrell, has said that precision weapons 'do not create collateral effects' and sees no reason that could 'bar [this contract] from happening'⁵⁶.

Given the eight grounds for turning down an arms export licence listed in the EU common position on arms exports⁷⁸ and Parliament's resolution of 30 November 2017 on the situation in Yemen⁹, which summarises the multiple grounds for an EU arms embargo on Saudi Arabia and criticises Member States for selling arms to the Gulf kingdom:¹⁰

What actions will the VP/HR pursue to guarantee that Spain does not export arms to Saudi Arabia that can be used to perpetrate human rights violations?

Will the VP/HR open investigations to clarify whether Spain has exported arms to Saudi Arabia that have been used in Yemen, and if so, oblige Spain to take responsibility?

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/13/spain-saudi-arabia-proceed-bomb-deal-yemen-concerns>

² <https://twitter.com/amnistiaespana/status/1040202317608431617>

³ <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/ArmsTransfers/AmericansDemocracyAndHumanRightsInBahrain.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/28/all-sides-in-yemen-may-be-responsible-for-war-crimes-say-un-experts>

⁵ <https://www.publico.es/internacional/yemen-arabia-saudi-mata-mutila-ninos-bombas-le-vendido-espana.html>

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/13/spain-saudi-arabia-proceed-bomb-deal-yemen-concerns>

⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/26/eu-under-mounting-pressure-to-ban-arms-sales-to-saudi-arabia>

⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:335:0099:0103:EN:PDF>

⁹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0473; <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2017-0473+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

¹⁰ <https://www.rt.com/news/411678-eu-parliament-saudi-embargo/>