



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Arms Export Policy Department
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Mr Peter Doubtfire
Coordinator, Peace Hub
41 Bull Street
Birmingham
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Dear Mr Doubtfire,

Thank you for your recent letter to the Foreign Secretary about the British Government's arms export control system and UK arms exports to Egypt. Your letter has been passed to the Arms Export Policy Department in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to respond.

The Government supports the responsible trade in defence equipment. All nations have the right to protect their people as enshrined in Article 51 of the UN Charter, and they have the right to acquire the means to do so.

However, the Government takes its arms export responsibilities very seriously and aims to operate one of the most rigorous and transparent arms export control regimes in the world. All defence and dual-use exports are made in accordance with the UK's strict export control legislation and in respect of international treaties and obligations.

Each application for an export licence is subject to rigorous case-by-case assessment against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (known as the Consolidated Criteria and available through the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consolidated-eu-and-national-arms-export-licensing-criteria>)

Risks around human rights abuses are a key part of our assessment. When making export licensing decisions, we distinguish between exports for legitimate defence, security purposes or civilian uses and exports which pose unacceptable risks to human rights. We do not export equipment where we assess there is a clear risk that it might be used for internal repression, or would provoke or prolong conflict within a country or region, or would be used aggressively against another country.

You specifically raised UK arms exports to Egypt. Egypt remains subject to an EU Foreign Affairs Council-agreed suspension on arms exports. The suspension means licences are suspended if we judge that they 'might be used in internal repression'. The UK fully supports this decision. This is a more stringent test than the Consolidated Criterion 2 test of whether there is a 'clear risk that goods might be used for internal repression'.

We have chosen to act in partnership with the other EU Member States, sending a clear signal that we condemn all violence in Egypt. The EU did not judge that the situation in Egypt justified an embargo. We together with EU colleagues wanted a rapid and marked tightening of the exports of controlled goods, which was achieved by setting the criterion for suspension at a tougher level than standard export licensing criteria.

We are determined to operate a clear, proportionate, and robust arms export control system in the UK. We thank you for your interest in these issues and hope our response goes some way to addressing your concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Riona Nicholls

**Head of Conventional Arms Policy Team
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