

Resourcing war and peace

Time to address the UK
Government's double standards

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Christian Aid is a Christian organisation that insists the world can and must be swiftly changed to one where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty.

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Cover: An elderly man walks along a rain soaked street in the old city of Mosul, Iraq. His home was destroyed during the 2017 Battle of Mosul, a US-led military operation to recapture the city from ISIS, who had held control of the city since June 2014. Credit: Act Alliance/Paul Jeffrey

List of Acronyms

CSSF	Conflict, Stability and Securitisation Fund
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
GNI	Gross national income
ICAI	Independent Committee on Aid Impact
IDC	International Development Committee (UK parliament)
LSE	London School of Economics
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSC	National Security Council (UK)
NSS	National Security Strategy
ODA	Official development assistance
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

Executive summary

Globally, there are around two billion people living in countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence.¹ In 2016, more countries experienced violent conflict than at any time in nearly 30 years.² At the end of 2017, over 68.5 million people had been displaced from their homes and livelihoods, including 40 million people displaced within their own countries.³

The sad truth is that violence and conflict remain the norm for many people – with profound consequences.

If current trends persist, by 2030 nearly half of the world's poor will live in areas marred by conflict.⁴ Where countries are affected by repeated cycles of violence, poverty rates are 20% higher.⁵ **People in poverty are crying out for peace.**

Building peace

Christian Aid is a partnership of people, churches and local organisations committed to ending poverty worldwide. We recognise that without a clear focus on peace, there can be no sustainable development.

Over the last 70 years we have worked in many contexts affected by violence and conflict. We have seen that while peace is broken every day, it is also built every day through the tireless work of peacemakers. Local actors are making a huge difference in their communities and nations, showing the world that peacebuilding can and does work.

But alone, it's not enough. Against the economic lure of the arms trade and the growing global trend of militarisation, building peace is an uphill struggle. What is needed is a radically different approach – with a clear vision placing local actors at the centre of peacebuilding – and the support of influential governments.

The role of the UK Government

This is a crucial moment for the UK as it looks to redefine its relationship with the EU and the wider world. The UK Government, as one of the world's largest aid donors, largest arms exporters and a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), is a global leader on war and peace.

There is much to celebrate about the UK's role in aid and development, in responding to climate change, upholding principles of multilateralism, supporting the UN Peacebuilding Fund, and committing to 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) for aid.

Yet undermining these peacebuilding efforts are some stark double standards fuelling war instead. Such as the fact the UK is currently on track to become one of the world's biggest arms dealers, exporting the majority of its arms to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

If the UK Government is really committed to peace, Christian Aid calls on them to address these stark double standards and champion international law and peace in its foreign and aid policies.

Double standards: selling arms

- Arms exports are considered a fundamental part of the UK's strategy to increase its own prosperity and security. Yet in pursuit of this, the UK Government is undermining its foreign aid agenda. The UK deliberately allocates at least 50% of its development spending to conflict-affected states and regions, yet more than 50% of its arms exports are now sold to countries within these same regions using their militaries to wage war abroad or repress their own people.⁶
- The double standards are most stark in relation to the UK's complicity in the conflict in Yemen. On one hand, the UK is leading calls in the UN for a peace agreement, and is the leading financial supporter of humanitarian aid to Yemenis and the UN Special Envoy's peace-making endeavours. On the other, it is promoting significant new arms sales to the government of Saudi Arabia and actively supporting military operations of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. This has included attacks that may amount to war crimes.
- UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia since it began operations in Yemen are reported to have contributed £4.6 billion to the UK's economy.⁷ Yet these arms sales are in direct violation of the Arms Trade Treaty and standards such as the EU's consolidated criteria, to which the UK is a signatory. Any economic gain from arms sales for the UK has significant and devastating consequences for Yemen.

Double standards: militarisation instead of funding peace

- Peacekeeping, defence and security forces can and do play a vital role in sustaining peace. However, over-reliance on the use of force as the principal means of conflict resolution may, itself, create and perpetuate a cycle of violence.
- The world spends nearly 10 times more on its military than it does on official development aid (ODA). While this ratio of peace and development is better than it has been in recent decades, there is still significantly more military spending. Of grave concern is the fact that the last two years have seen a reversal of more positive long-term trends from the last two decades in the UK and Europe. Overall, despite relative decline in recent years, militarisation is increasing globally. The UK currently spends about £37bn on its military, or nearly £600 per person per year – in effect spending three times the amount that it spends on aid.⁸ Its military spending per capita and as a percentage of national income is already about 40% above the European average.⁹
- The significance of this global trend is that it provides a major business opportunity. The government of Saudi Arabia spends the equivalent of \$12,000 per Saudi Arabian household on the country's military.¹⁰ This has not gone unnoticed by arms-producing states. Saudi Arabia is now the UK's biggest customer.

Double standards: an unclear vision of peacebuilding

- The UK Government recognises the critical contribution that aid can make to building long-term stability, and there has been a welcome shift towards a more coherent approach across

government to address conflict and security. However, a lack of transparency in the National Security Council (NSC), the predominant forum where the UK's cross-government approaches to conflict are agreed, hinders clarity on UK policy. About half of the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF)¹¹ is spent on military and defence activities, and around £200 million of the fund's activity is shrouded in secrecy, resisting repeated calls for greater transparency.¹²

- Despite the UK's increased focus on local actors in funding peacebuilding, this commitment isn't translating into action. Commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) and elsewhere to increase funding for local peace actors, aren't translated into genuine support for those that are closest to peacebuilding in communities. We are at risk of failing to meet the targets set at the WHS.
- At the same time, civil society space is shrinking globally. The voices of countless local peacemakers are often attacked, sidelined and obscured. Activists and human rights defenders, on the frontlines of violence and peacemaking, are also attacked, tortured, silenced, and murdered. In 2017 more than 300 human rights defenders were murdered. Many more experienced violence and abuse and were forced to flee their homes and livelihoods.¹³

Time for a radically different approach to peacebuilding

Business as usual will not deliver the peace needed in today's world. Indeed, economic interest is driving motivation for how the UK Government engages in these issues and is at the heart of these double standards. We need to radically shift our focus if we are to reverse the trend from violence to peace.

Christian Aid calls on the UK Government to stop fuelling war and be a peacemaker:

1. The UK Government should stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia, and other states which are violating international law, in breach of its own international commitments including those to regulate the arms trade.
2. The UK Government, along with other governments across the globe, should commit to significantly more spending on peace and less on militarisation.
3. While the UK Government has, in many ways, led global efforts to respond to conflict, it needs a clearer vision of peacebuilding, putting those living in conflict, particularly local peace actors, at the heart of its approach.

Introduction

Around two billion people live in countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence.¹⁴ Poverty rates are 20% higher in countries affected by repeated cycles of violence.¹⁵ By 2030, an estimated 46% of the world's poor will live in areas characterised as fragile or conflict-affected.¹⁶ Countries affected by complex violence and conflict are falling behind.

The failure to address violence and conflict has immense and profound consequences on the world today. In 2017, estimates showed that up to \$14.76 trillion was lost to the global economy.¹⁷ By the end of 2017, over 68.5 million people were displaced from their homes and livelihoods as a result of conflict and violence, including 40 million people displaced within their own countries.¹⁸ The impact on people's lives of human rights violations and the failure to respect international humanitarian law in contexts of violence, is immeasurable.

Christian Aid recognises that without a clear focus on peace, there can be no sustainable development. Throughout Christian Aid's work providing humanitarian assistance and long-term development support, it has become clear that we cannot ignore the reality of violence. Peace and justice matter to us as a faith-based organisation.

We recognise that governments have a vital responsibility in protecting human rights, providing security and access to justice, and for sustaining peace. The UK Government, as one of the world's largest donors, largest arms exporters, and as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), is a central actor globally in relation to war and peace.

The UK has, for some time, championed addressing the challenges facing conflict-affected and fragile states, having committed to spend 50% of the international aid budget on such countries.¹⁹ Christian Aid welcomes the UK Government's continued commitment to meet the UN's target of spending 0.7% of GNI on official development assistance (ODA). The increased national and UN funding streams for preventing conflict and building peace, and recent commitments to a rules-based international order are also to be welcomed.

However, if the UK Government is really committed to peace, it must address some stark double standards identified in this report and shift the balance more towards peace:

- **The UK Government should stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia, and other states which are violating international law, in breach of its own international commitments including those to regulate the arms trade.**
- **The UK Government, along with other governments across the globe, should commit to significantly more spending on peace and less on militarisation.**
- **While the UK Government has, in many ways, led global efforts to respond to conflict, it needs a clearer vision of peacebuilding, putting those living in conflict, particularly local peace actors, at the heart of its approach.**

Business as usual will not deliver the peace needed in today's world. Indeed, putting UK business first is at the heart of these double standards. We need to radically shift our focus if we are to reverse the trend from violence to peace. Christian Aid is calling on the UK Government to be a peacemaker and address these double standards.

Stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia

The UK Government should stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia, and other states which are violating international law, in breach of its own international commitments including those to regulate the arms trade.

Global Britain and arms exports

While the UK has been increasing international development aid and prioritising it towards conflict-affected countries, it is increasingly undermining this through its pursuit of arms exports to repressive states using force illegally at home and abroad, and more broadly to states in violation of international law.

The UK deliberately allocates at least 50% of its development spending to conflict-affected states and regions, yet more than 50% of its arms exports are now sold to countries within these same regions, using their militaries to wage war abroad or repress their own people.

Below: Aid vs. arms.²⁰



According to the National Security Strategy (NSS) set by the UK Government in late 2015, progress in measuring the UK's national security should be measured against three key objectives: protecting British people, projecting UK influence, and promoting British prosperity.²¹ Tellingly, tackling conflict and building stability overseas is incorporated within the second objective. The final objective is key to understanding the focus on arms exports over the ensuing three years. Indeed, the NSS lists among its five priorities to:

'Promote our prosperity, expanding our economic relationship with growing powers such as India and China, helping to build global prosperity, investing in innovation and skills, and supporting UK defence and security exports.'²²

Arms exports are considered a fundamental part of the UK's strategy to increase its own prosperity and security. Since the referendum vote to leave the EU in June 2016, the advent of a complementary Global Britain strategy to promote British influence and exports beyond Europe has tended to increase this focus on arms exports and security alliances in the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific region, where all of the world's top 13 arms importers are located.²³

Below: Top 15 military spenders in 2017.

Top 15 military spenders in 2017

Countries with highest military expenditure
In current 2017 US \$ billion



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Saudi Arabia, Oman and now Qatar are the primary focus of efforts to sell British arms, but the UK is also a major and growing supplier of arms and military technology to Turkey, Israel and the United Arab Emirates, all of which are heavily involved in armed conflicts in the region.²⁴

Over the last five years (2013-2017), the UK has sold over two-thirds of its major arms exports to Gulf Arab states, with Saudi Arabia alone accounting for 49% of all such exports.²⁵ No other arms exporter comes close to this dependence on the Gulf market.²⁶ In turn, this means that the Royal Saudi Air Force is hugely dependent on British-made aircraft and missiles – maintained and supported in-country by British military and civilian technicians – for its own operations.²⁷

This is problematic given that the main countries targeted for increased arms exports from the UK are either within designated fragile regions, or conducting military operations within or against fragile states. Despite popular and legal challenges, the UK continues to license and sell billions of dollars' worth of arms to Saudi Arabia. A glance at the UK Government's consolidated EU and national licensing criteria on arms exports shows how it appears to be acting in direct violation of its own rules and commitments in doing so.²⁸

Title of table: Consolidated EU and national arms export licensing criteria: Potential relevance to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)²⁹

Consolidated EU and national arms export licensing criteria: Potential relevance to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)			
Criteria		Potential relevance	Enforcement
1	Exports restricted by UN/EU sanctions of non-proliferation treaties	Applicable to certain weapons – e.g. Weapons of mass destruction, land mines and cluster bombs.	Enforced now ³⁰
2	Recipient country fails to respect human rights and freedoms, and/or violates international humanitarian law	KSA has few political rights, little freedom for women and has been shown to breach international humanitarian law in its combat operations in Yemen.	Not enforced
3	Tensions or armed conflicts within recipient country	KSA has significant internal tensions and has used force against internal opponents.	Not enforced
4	Preservation of regional peace, security and stability	KSA is directly and indirectly involved in wars in Yemen, Iraq and Syria, and in a major proxy war with Iran.	Not enforced – interpreted as preserving regional stability via its opposition to Iran.
5	National security of the UK, its territories and friendly or allied countries	KSA is no direct threat to UK but has threatened Qatar, with which the UK is very friendly.	Not enforced
6	Recipient's attitude to terrorism, the nature of its alliances and respect for international law	KSA has been a major financial supporter of radical and armed Islamic movements across the world; the murder of Jemal Khashoggi in its embassy in Turkey in 2018 has raised significant concerns about breaches of international law.	Not enforced
7	Potential for buyer to re-export under undesirable conditions	KSA is not known to divert major weapons systems to other states but may do so with small arms.	May not be relevant
8	Technical and economic capacity of the recipient country	KSA requires UK technical support to maintain and operate imported weapons and diverts more of its economy to its military than almost any other state.	Not enforced

The Arms Trade Treaty and the consolidated EU and national arms export licencing criteria are dependent on states policing themselves. Thus, in the absence of legally-binding enforcement mechanisms, the UK Government has failed to uphold most of its own commitments to restrict arms sales to a highly problematic customer state.

The consequences for the men, women and children of Yemen

The most glaring example of the double standard in the UK's response to global conflict is its involvement in the four-year war in Yemen. On one side, the UK is leading calls in the UN for a peace agreement, and is the leading financial supporter of humanitarian aid to Yemenis and the UN Special Envoy's peace-making endeavours. On the other, it is promoting massive new arms sales to the government of Saudi Arabia and actively supporting military operations of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, which have included attacks that may amount to war crimes, such as airstrikes on residential areas, markets, weddings, and even medical facilities.

UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia since it began operations in Yemen are reported to have contributed £4.6 billion to the UK's economic prosperity.³¹ In effect, diplomatic efforts to end the conflict, and the humanitarian response to the acute crisis, are completely undermined by the UK's complicity in fuelling the conflict through arms sales. These arms sales are in direct violation of the Arms Trade Treaty and standards such as the EU's consolidated criteria.

Any economic gain from arms sales for the UK has huge consequences for Yemen. The UN Secretary General urged the warring parties and the international community to 'halt the senseless cycle of violence' and 'reach a political settlement', highlighting how international humanitarian law has been flouted repeatedly.³²

With 14 million children, women and men – half of Yemen's population – on the brink of famine, there has never been a more urgent time to act. According to the UN, 400,000 children are on the cusp of dying from hunger, 15,000 more than last year.³³ What the country needs most right now is an immediate end to the fighting. The catastrophic food shortages in Yemen are entirely human made and a direct consequence of the warring parties' severe restrictions on access to food, fuel, medical imports and humanitarian aid.

The collapse of the Yemeni Rial and the non-payment of public sector workers is adding to the tragic situation. Civilian deaths have increased dramatically in recent months – with 450 civilians killed in just nine days in August 2018.³⁴ Violence against women and girls has also risen significantly since the conflict escalated.

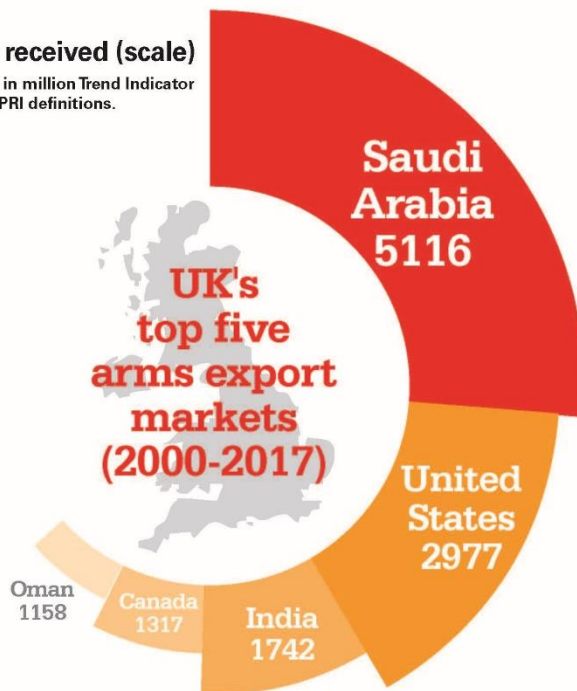
'[Yemen is] the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. This is not a natural disaster. It is man-made. Yemen today stands on a precipice'

António Guterres, UN Secretary General.

Below: Saudi Arabia receives more arms exports from the UK than any other country.

Arms exports received (scale)

Figures are expressed in million Trend Indicator Value, according to SIPRI definitions.



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The situation in Yemen increasingly casts a shadow on the UK Government's attempts to profile itself as a values-based international actor committed to tackling global conflict. Germany, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, and Finland have all suspended arms sales to Saudi Arabia, and Denmark has suspended future arms exports.³⁵ Canada may soon follow suit.³⁶ The US Senate has also provoked debate on ongoing support to the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.³⁷

Christian Aid urges the UK Government to act upon its own stated commitment to uphold international law and the Arms Trade Treaty by:

- **Immediately ending UK support to the Saudi coalition's bombing campaign in Yemen.**
- **Immediately suspending all arms sales to Saudi Arabia and other repressive regimes and states that are violating international law.**
- **Applying the regulations of the Arms Trade Treaty and respecting its own rules and commitments more transparently and honestly.**
- **Demonstrating a values-based approach as the UK moves beyond the EU and its regulatory frameworks, upholding and enforcing standards on arms exports at least equal to the EU's consolidated criteria.**

More spending on peace

The UK Government, along with other governments across the globe, should commit to significantly more spending on peace and less on militarisation.

Providing security in a globalised world

A key role for states is keeping citizens safe and secure. This includes providing defence and security capabilities both nationally and internationally. Security in a globalised world where violence is increasingly complex, has become one of the most challenging responsibilities of government. It requires efforts to ensure the safety and wellbeing of citizens at home, as well as a firm commitment to international peace and security, based on the rule of law.

Increasingly, conflict environments feature not only state armies but non-state armed groups, criminal gangs, drug traffickers, and terrorists, where civilians may be both victim and perpetrator. These actors employ new communications and weapons technologies, and frequently operate across national borders and regions, even when local allegiances are a critical dynamic of violence.³⁸ These complex dynamics pose significant challenges for states and institutions in their response.

Peacekeeping, defence and security forces can and do play a vital role in sustaining peace. However, over-reliance on the use of force as the principal means of conflict resolution may, itself, create and perpetuate a cycle of violence. Among the lessons of Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya are that wars, once started, are difficult to end, and their devastation precipitates further insecurity, displacement and violence.³⁹

Challenging increasing militarisation

Right-hand box: See end notes.⁴⁰

A 2015 Security Council mandated global study on the implementation of UNSC resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, assessed progress at the global, regional and national levels in improving women's participation and protection in conflict and post-conflict settings. From its consultations with women in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East, the emphatic conclusions of women were that there must be an end to the present cycle of militarisation, with its unprecedented levels of military spending, and that armed intervention by the international community and member states must only be the last resort.⁴¹

Women spoke with one voice from every continent to convey a key message to the Security Council:

'...the United Nations must take the lead in stopping the process of militarisation and militarism that began in 2001 in an ever-increasing cycle of conflict. The normalisation of violence at the local, national and international levels must cease. Networks of women peacebuilders and peacemakers must be expanded and supported to come to the fore.'

They chronicled how the militarisation of society breeds new levels of violence and how impunity for these crimes becomes endemic. In recent times, armed conflicts have proliferated at a faster pace than

In 2017, the world spent an estimated \$1.74tn dollars on weapons and its military. That is \$231 for every man, woman and child.

Last year saw the first real terms increase in global military spending since the end of the US occupation of Iraq in 2011. If the trend continues as expected in 2018, the figure is likely to exceed \$1.8tn – the highest it has ever been.

our ability to tackle them effectively. This proliferation has taken place in a context of increased militarisation, reflected both in the steady growth of military budgets as well as the frequent use of military force to settle disputes.⁴²

Christian Aid, in our work supporting local civil society actors both men and women, shares these concerns. Military responses should be used sparingly and prevention and protection through non-violent means should be emphasised more by the UK Government and the international community. More resources should also be dedicated to peacebuilding – in particular, mechanisms such as the UN Peacebuilding Fund. If force is used, even for the protection of civilians, there must be clarity and clear, attainable objectives.

The ratio of peace and development to military spending

Globally, the ratio of military spending to ODA is close to 10-1, with between \$150 to \$200 billion spent on international development and humanitarian aid in 2017.⁴³ The ratio of peace and development to military spending is better than it has been in recent decades, but there is still significantly more military spending. Of grave concern is the fact that the last two years have seen a reversal of more positive long-term trends from the last two decades in the UK and Europe.

Overall, despite relative decline in recent years, globally militarisation is increasing.

Measured as a percentage of total economic output (known as gross domestic product or GDP) the 2.2% that the world currently spends on military force is by no means exceptional; it is barely half what was spent in the early 1980s.⁴⁴ The proportion spent now is exactly what it was in the years before the 9/11 attacks and the launch of the War on Terror campaigns. Yet years of steady reduction have ended and the proportion is again rising as military confrontation becomes more of a reality in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

Below: The world's real term spend on military, 1998-2017⁴⁵

The world's real term spend on military has almost doubled since 1998.



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Europe is not immune to such trends. In 2017, the share of income that the EU spent on its military increased for the first time in eight years⁴⁶ and there is very strong pressure, not least from the United States, that bigger increases should be made this year and each year thereafter.⁴⁷ Together, EU states spend around \$260 billion on their militaries each year.⁴⁸ That is about the same as the total income of Finland or Scotland.

The UK follows the European trend of increased military spending from 2017 after years of spending falling. Yet its military spending per capita and as a percentage of national income is already about 40% above the European average.⁴⁹ The UK currently spends about £37 billion on its military, or nearly £600 per person per year.⁵⁰ Of this amount, 5-7% is usually spent on maintaining UK nuclear weapons, although this proportion will more than double in 2018/19 and over the next decade as a new fleet of Dreadnought nuclear-armed submarines is built.⁵¹ In total, up to £41 billion has been budgeted for renewing the nuclear capability and up to another £150 billion will be spent on maintaining them over their lifetime.⁵²

The UK currently spends about £37bn on its military, or nearly £600 per person per year – in effect spending three times the amount on the military that it spends on aid.

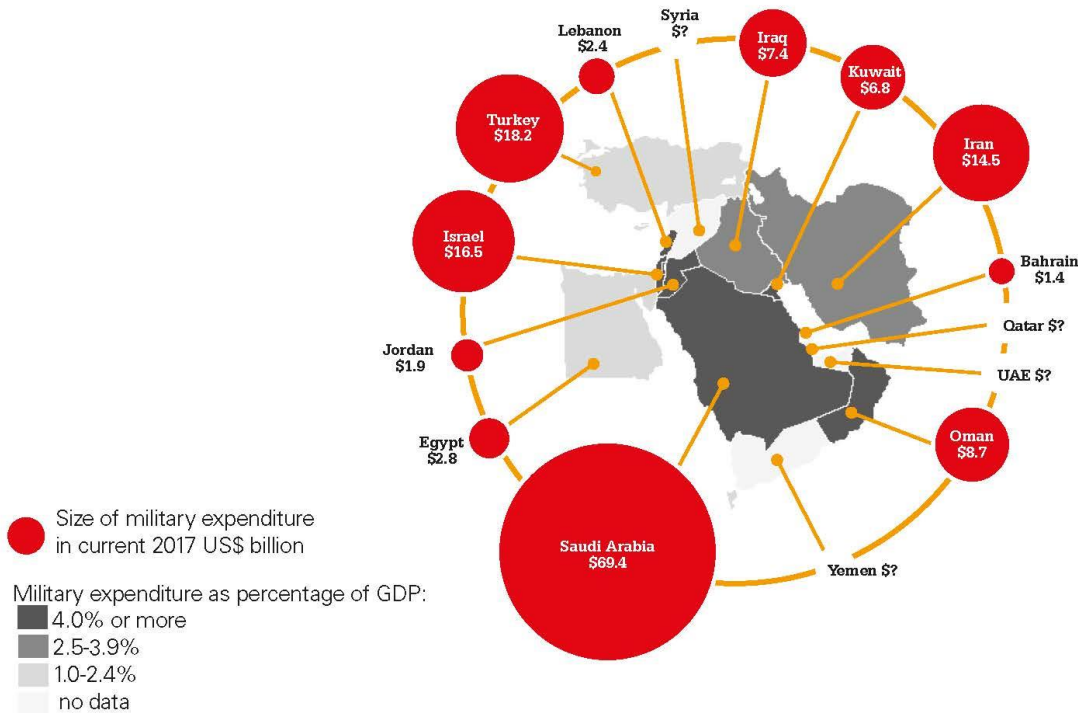
Military spending in the Middle East

Spending on arms in the Middle East and North Africa is far higher than in Europe. Estimates range between 5-6% of GDP, three or four times the European average.⁵³ Saudi Arabia alone has surpassed Russia, India, the UK and France to become the world's third largest military spender.⁵⁴ Along with Israel, it has the world's highest military expenditure per capita.⁵⁵ The government of Saudi Arabia spends the equivalent of \$12,000 per Saudi Arabian

household on the country's military.⁵⁶ **For arms-producing states, including the UK, this is a major business opportunity.**

Below: Saudi Arabia spends more on military than any other country in the Middle East.

Military expenditure in the Middle East 2017



Copyright: Myriad for SIPRI, 2018

Military spending is one way in which governments try to increase their influence in the world. States exercise hard and soft power in the areas of defence, diplomacy and development. Along with defence, most richer countries also invest in diplomats, who aim to increase political influence and understanding, and ODA, both as short-term humanitarian aid and longer-term economic and social development.

There has been a big increase in aid spending by many rich states, including most of Europe and, latterly, Gulf Arab states. The UK alone has increased its spending on international development from less than 0.3% of GNI at the turn of the century to a steady 0.7% since 2013.⁵⁷ A 2015 law commits the government to funding development spending at this level, making the UK one of only six countries which have met the UN-agreed target of 0.7% GNI on ODA. While increasing ODA made steady progress against defence spending between 1999 and 2015, the ratio is now stable or increasing somewhat as the defence budget is pledged to increase slightly while ODA stays pegged to 0.7%.

Christian Aid acknowledges the importance of defence and security to peace – however, the UK Government needs to make a choice to change the trajectory towards peace. An overly militarised response is more likely to result in war. The UK and governments across the globe need to:

- **Prioritise structural or longer-term approaches to preventing armed conflict that address the underlying causes of war and violence. They should aim to bring about a reduction in the potential for armed or political violence over time, and promote non-violent means to address acute need and rights entitlements.**
- **Ensure that its spending on peacebuilding is transparent, accountable and used to restrain rather than reinforce armed actors, and that increases in UK diplomatic capacity include prioritising skills in conflict analysis and mediation.**
- **Include efforts to address structural inequality and violence, respect international law and human security, and engage in demilitarisation, disarmament and reduction in spending on armaments.**
- **Spend significantly more on peacebuilding than military responses. They should do this with funding mechanisms that clearly state their objectives and how they will contribute to reducing violence and conflict but also how they will build peace.**
- **The UK should also reflect on its own experience of conflict and military intervention, and incorporate lessons from this – good and bad – into a clear policy.**

A clearer vision for peacebuilding

While the UK Government has, in many ways, led global efforts to respond to conflict, it needs a clearer vision of peacebuilding, putting those living in conflict, particularly local peace actors, at the heart of its approach.

The need for a clear focus on peace

Spending on international development is not the same as investing in peace and conflict prevention. How aid is spent to further peace matters very much. The UK Government has recognised the critical contribution that aid can make to building long-term stability through the Department for International Development's (DFID) Building Stability Framework, and that this in turn requires a long-term approach to helping communities, states and regions develop by managing conflict and change peacefully.⁵⁸

Over 50% of ODA has been committed to fragile states and regions, and there have also been shifts towards a more coherent approach across government to address conflict and insecurity, which can bring positive opportunities to highlight development and peacebuilding approaches.⁵⁹

However, the National Security Council (NSC) is the predominant forum where the UK's cross-government approaches to conflict and fragile contexts overseas are discussed, and a lack of transparency around NSC strategies can hinder clarity around UK policy approaches. Unlike aid and military expenditure, there is currently no

standard measurement of national spending on peacebuilding or a target. Like development, what constitutes a contribution to peace, conflict resolution or stabilisation, has been highly open to interpretation.

The UN has proposed that member states make compulsory contributions to its UN Peacebuilding Fund equal to 1% of their contributions to UN peacekeeping, or \$100 million in total, whichever is higher.⁶⁰ The current UN peacekeeping budget is \$6.7 billion, equivalent to just \$1 for every \$260 (0.38%) spent by member states on their militaries for other tasks.⁶¹ The UK is a bit better than average as it contributes £345 million per year to UN peacekeeping, which is about 0.9% of its own military spending.⁶² It is also the leading national contributor to the UN Peacebuilding Fund.⁶³ Yet contributing to UN peacekeeping or peacebuilding funds are not the main way that most countries aim to support peacebuilding. Most money is spent through national bureaucracies – usually foreign ministries or development agencies – and will often be spent in support of specific national economic or security interests.

While a more coherent approach to conflict and stability across government brings opportunities, Christian Aid is concerned that the UK Government risks putting its own perceived national security and domestic interests ahead of human security and protection of those living in conflict. The surge in arrival of asylum seekers to the EU in 2015 and renewed fears in relation to terrorism, resulted in major shifts in European ODA to northern Africa and contributed to the UK's increasingly security-focused approach to conflict management.⁶⁴

This securitised response from donors and multilateral institutions is often in place of, and can be at the expense of, a clear focus on peace, human rights and justice. Countries on the verge of collapse and undergoing serious political crises can become important international concerns, not so much because they cause untold human suffering that should be resolved, but because they are perceived as posing cross-border threats to European and North American security – i.e. they are seen as likely to trigger mass cross-border migration; exacerbate outbreaks of communicable diseases; worsen environmental depletion; or provide havens for organised crime and terrorism.⁶⁵ The trend towards securitisation has been accompanied by increasingly strident anti-refugee and anti-migrant pressures in European countries, and the increasing turn of many donor governments to restructure their development aid in the 'national interest' – despite this being proven a less effective way to reduce poverty.⁶⁶

The Crisis States Research Centre of the London School of Economics (LSE) has warned that the securitisation of development is damaging for both the project of global poverty reduction as well as global security.⁶⁷ Besides the strong moral imperative to ensure that the lives and needs of people living in conflict-affected states are at the centre of decisions in relation to aid, peacebuilding and development-oriented approaches which address the root causes of conflict and displacement, would be more effective in the longer term rather than short-term approaches which are driven by border control agendas or narrow security interests.

The Conflict, Security and Stabilisation Fund

Time for an urgent review

A specific fund on conflict is to be welcomed. However, the contradictions and double standards in the UK's approach to peace and security is nowhere starker than in the cross-departmental Conflict, Security and Stabilisation Fund (CSSF).⁶⁸

This fund spends over £1 billion every year to allow for close cooperation between departments and flexibility in fast-changing conflict situations, around 40% of which is official UK aid. Around £200 million of the fund's activity is shrouded in secrecy and it has resisted repeated calls for greater transparency.⁶⁹

In some instances, this fund supports UN peacekeeping and peace support operations overseas. Important work has been funded in South Sudan, for example, where the fund allows adaptable operations to respond to the fast-changing context and works to support local peacebuilding groups too.

Yet around half of the CSSF is spent on military and defence activities. The National Security Strategy (NSS) has explicitly stated that boosting arms exports from British businesses is part of its objectives. The CSSF deliberately prioritises the national security of the UK rather than the security or stability of the country where work is being funded. It is also led by priorities such as countering violent extremism, or the government's view of unacceptably radical ideology. Many of these projects are those kept secret.

Throughout, the CSSF has failed to demonstrate it has a credible focus on tackling poverty or building peace.

Proving results in such contexts is challenging but the impression is that benefits for people in poverty is an afterthought. The fund has been universally criticised by parliamentary committees for being secretive, pursuing mixed and even contradictory objectives, lacking any evidence of effectiveness in tackling poverty, and avoiding accountability to Parliament or the public.

Christian Aid calls for fundamental reform of the CSSF to make it fit for purpose:

1. Joining the International Development Committee (IDC) and the Independent Committee on Aid Impact (ICAI), we call for an urgent review of the continuation of the CSSF in its current form as there remain grave failings in its programme management, lack of ministerial oversight, its learning about what works, and its focus on the end goal of building sustainable peace.
2. The CSSF should be adapted into a peacebuilding fund. The objectives must be narrowed substantially to focus very clearly on peacebuilding and peace initiatives, and the wider national security objectives should be dropped.
3. The CSSF and other cross-government funds fall well short of the levels of transparency required to secure public trust and confidence in their delivery, and must immediately be made more transparent.
4. We strongly support the IDC's insistence that poverty reduction should be the primary objective of all aid, no matter which department or fund is responsible for delivering it.

The importance of local actors in peacebuilding

The UK Government needs to invest more in supporting local peace actors and local responders in humanitarian contexts. Local actors make a huge difference in turning the tide of violence. While ultimately peace can only be realised when actors at the local, national and international levels work together, unless we learn from and work with those most directly affected by the violence, we will not capture the value and knowledge of what local peacebuilding can bring to the wider international community.

The 'localisation' agenda in humanitarian response, which seeks to value local and national humanitarian actors, was affirmed in the Grand Bargain, an agreement between more than 30 of the biggest donors and aid providers, which aims to get more means into the hands of people in need and change the way response is driven.⁷⁰

Christian Aid's work with local partners

Christian Aid's peacebuilding and violence prevention activities support local peace actors across 20 countries. Every day, across our work, we see that peacebuilding is not limited within narrow geographic scopes, timeframes or sectoral activities, but places an understanding on the realities of the daily experience of violence and conflict as central to engagement or external intervention.

In **Colombia**, Christian Aid's local partners worked to ensure the peace negotiations in 2016 were inclusive and took victims into account. As a result of consistent lobbying, a considerable number of victims participated in the negotiations in Havana. For the first time ever, a special sub-commission on gender was established, and our partner, Sisma Mujer, was an advisor to the gender commission.

In **Zimbabwe**, a partner has successfully mobilised communities in human rights monitoring and created an effective and efficient early warning system using mobile technology. Peacebuilding work with traditional

leaders also contributed to a reduction in violence in the 2012 election and partners' advocacy influenced the creation of a National Peace and Reconciliation Commission.

In **Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory**, partners have pursued international accountability mechanisms to highlight impunity, secured protections and wins for communities at risk of displacement, and begun to engage the Israeli public on the issue of transitional justice.

In **Central America**, partners have secured key outcomes in relation to reducing gang violence, influencing public policies on violence, worked with local authorities to protect local communities amongst other achievements.

In humanitarian contexts such as the **Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, South Sudan and Myanmar**, local actors have played a vital role in enhancing resilience in conflict settings.

In a global context, where the nature of conflict has changed considerably with the increasing prominence of non-state actors and the complex nature of violence and overlapping layers of conflict, there is a strong case to be made for approaches to peacemaking that spans multiple levels, and therefore local actors have an increasingly important role to play. Even in places typically unreached by state institutions and development agencies, there are voices for peace coming from those surviving conflict and violence daily. It is argued that ignoring or misunderstanding these local actors is what largely accounts for the failure of international peacebuilding efforts.⁷¹

The focus on local actors brings its own challenges – they can be as corrupt or intolerant as national actors or even as contested and violent as any other context.⁷² Yet these voices, and those of other countless local peacemakers elsewhere, are often attacked and side-lined. Globally, civil society space is under threat and in 2017 more than 300 human rights defenders were murdered. Many more were attacked, tortured, silenced and were forced to flee their homes and livelihoods.⁷³ These actors are side-lined and obscured by the tendency of international and higher-level actors to put themselves as central to the issue. As a result, opportunities are often missed and local and national peacemakers and responders are marginalised, despite the UK's Grand Bargain commitment to direct 25% of its global humanitarian funding to local and national actors by 2020.

Lessons from peace actors in South Sudan

A report Christian Aid published in May 2018, *In it for the Long Haul? Lessons on peacebuilding in South Sudan*, highlighted that peace is broken every day by many actors but it is also somehow sustained: by the common, regular interventions of ordinary men and women to enable dialogue; by elders who build trust across ethnic or political divides; by faith leaders who seek reconciliation and peaceful coexistence; or by youth who demand a more inclusive future.⁷⁴

Our report showed local peacebuilding matters because:

- Peace is made and broken every day in South Sudan; conflict never ends. The aim should be to help communities manage it peacefully.
- It can mitigate the worst effects of national conflict, and can help people move around, earn a living, trade with each other and get more of what they need. It can improve people's lives, even if for a short time, despite national instability
- It can build relationships and expand the choices available to people and communities, helping them to opt-out of conflict, or prepare for peace to prevail when opportunities become more apparent.
- Focusing on community-level conflict can provide key entry points and opportunities for long-term, transformational change which helps tackle the underlying causes of national conflict and provide key building blocks for longer-term national stability.
- Communities' experience of conflict varies greatly across South Sudan, so can only be addressed with approaches which are suited to each context.

States, multilateral institutions, and diplomatic staff have a key role to play in peacebuilding. The UK Government must address the symptoms and root causes of conflict, tackling issues that may fuel it. Effective peacebuilding must involve the entire system – from people's homes to their governments – and it requires a sustained, coordinated, and coherent approach.

With that in mind, the UK Government must champion conflict resolution, peacebuilding and mediation in its diplomatic efforts. It should ensure that all its responses are conflict sensitive, and focus on long-term responses rather than quick fixes. The UK Government needs to:

- **Develop a stronger coherent, cross-government approach to delivering peace with open and shared objectives. It should invest more in effective peacebuilding initiatives, particularly supporting local peace actors and peacemakers, who know their communities, understand the political and cultural issues, and are building peace every day.**
- **Actively consult with civil society and ensure that there is greater transparency of government strategies and operations, including funding mechanisms such as CSSF. Greater collaboration and input from aid agencies, NGOs and civil society should also be sought to help to inform more effective responses.**
- **Passionately and actively champion respect for international human rights and humanitarian law, and seek to address the root causes of conflict. These include economic inequality, abuse of power and impunity for those violating international law. A strong commitment to conflict sensitivity should be standard good practice.**

- **The UNSC should seek more ambitious funding from member states for the UN Peacebuilding Fund which, at 1 or 1.5% of the global peacekeeping spend, is ludicrously small and reinforces the powerful message that military force is the pre-eminent resource needed to tackle conflict. However, this fund should focus on supporting long-term initiatives that address the root causes of conflict and support local peacebuilding in particular.**

Recommendations

1. **The UK Government should stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia, and other states which are violating international law, in breach of its own international commitments including those to regulate the arms trade.**

The situation in Yemen increasingly casts a shadow on the UK Government's attempts to profile itself as a values-based international actor committed to tackling global conflict. Germany, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, and Finland have all suspended arms sales to Saudi Arabia, and Denmark has suspended future arms exports.⁷⁵ Canada may soon follow suit.⁷⁶ The US Senate has also provoked debate on ongoing support to the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.⁷⁷

Christian Aid urges the UK Government to act upon its own stated commitment to uphold international law and the Arms Trade Treaty by:

- a. Immediately ending UK support to the Saudi coalition's bombing campaign in Yemen.
 - b. Immediately suspending all arms sales to Saudi Arabia and other repressive regimes and states that are violating international law.
 - c. Applying the regulations of the Arms Trade Treaty and respecting its own rules and commitments more transparently and honestly.
 - d. Demonstrating a values-based approach as the UK moves beyond the EU and its regulatory frameworks, upholding and enforcing standards on arms exports at least equal to the EU's consolidated criteria.
2. **The UK Government, along with other governments across the globe, should commit to significantly more spending on peace and less on militarisation.**

Christian Aid acknowledges the importance of defence and security to peace – however, the UK Government needs to make a choice to change the trajectory towards peace. An overly militarised response is more likely to result in war. The UK and governments across the globe need to:

- a. Prioritise structural or longer-term approaches to preventing armed conflict that address the underlying causes of war and violence. They should aim to bring about a reduction in the potential for armed or political violence over time, and promote non-violent means to address acute need and rights entitlements.

- b. Ensure that its spending on peacebuilding is transparent, accountable and used to restrain rather than reinforce armed actors, and that increases in UK diplomatic capacity include prioritising skills in conflict analysis and mediation.
 - c. Include efforts to address structural inequality and violence, respect international law and human security, and engage in demilitarisation, disarmament and reduction in spending on armaments.
 - d. Spend significantly more on peacebuilding than military responses. They should do this with funding mechanisms that clearly state their objectives and how they will contribute to reducing violence and conflict but also how they will build peace.
 - e. The UK should also reflect on its own experience of conflict and military intervention, and incorporate lessons from this – good and bad – into a clear policy.
- 3. While the UK Government has, in many ways, led global efforts to respond to conflict, it needs a clearer vision of peacebuilding, putting those living in conflict, particularly local peace actors, at the heart of its approach.**

The UK Government must champion conflict resolution, peacebuilding and mediation in its diplomatic efforts. It should ensure that all its responses are conflict sensitive, and focus on long-term responses rather than quick fixes. The UK Government needs to:

- a. Develop a stronger coherent, cross-government approach to delivering peace with open and shared objectives. It should invest more in effective peacebuilding initiatives, particularly supporting local peace actors and peacemakers, who know their communities, understand the political and cultural issues, and are building peace every day.
- b. Actively consult with civil society and ensure that there is greater transparency of government strategies and operations, including funding mechanisms such as CSSF. Greater collaboration and input from aid agencies, NGOs and civil society should also be sought to help to inform more effective responses.
- c. Passionately and actively champion respect for international human rights and humanitarian law, and seek to address the root causes of conflict. These include economic inequality, abuse of power and impunity for those violating international law. A strong commitment to conflict sensitivity should be standard good practice.
- d. The UNSC should seek more ambitious funding from member states for the UN Peacebuilding Fund which, at 1 or 1.5% of the global peacekeeping spend, is ludicrously small and reinforces the powerful message that military force is the pre-eminent resource needed to tackle conflict. However, this fund should focus on supporting long-term initiatives that address the root causes of conflict and support local peacebuilding in particular.

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