

# CAMPAIGN FOR YEMEN

An action guide

#YemenCantWait



OXFAM

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# YEMEN: AN ACTION GUIDE

March 2022 marked seven years of war in Yemen. Millions of Yemenis are trapped in life-threatening poverty and desperately need all parties to urgently commit to an end to the war. More than 23.4 million people, which is almost 75% of Yemen's population need humanitarian assistance and protection. Widespread destruction of the country's health services and water infrastructure have left Yemenis acutely vulnerable to disease, including coronavirus. Oxfam is standing with the people of Yemen against this injustice, pushing for lasting changes so they can rebuild their lives in peace.

We need your help in campaigning for peace in Yemen, and for the UK government to drive forward the peace process. At the moment, the UK licenses sales of arms to the Saudi-led coalition which are being used in the conflict in Yemen. This action guide is designed to be used as a starting point to help you as individual activists, campaigners and groups think about actions you can take as part of the wider campaign.

We are here to support you through every step in in your campaigning! If you would like to chat through any of your ideas, please do get in touch with Sophie who manages the Oxfam Student Activist Network at [smorbey@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:smorbey@oxfam.org.uk).



© Bassam Al-Thulaya/Oxfam Yemen

Image: Civilian houses hit during airstrike raids in Sana'a May 2019

# THE CONFLICT SO FAR

Yemen remains the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. Whilst you don't need to know all the detail, it's important to understand some of the key milestones below to help you be able to explain what's happening simply in a way that people will understand. If you have any questions at all, please do get in touch with Sophie at [smorbey1@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:smorbey1@oxfam.org.uk)!

## DECEMBER 2014

The Arms Trade Treaty, the first global agreement to regulate the arms trade, entered into force

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## MARCH 2015

Airstrikes across Yemen were launched by a coalition led by Saudi Arabia, marking the escalation of the conflict throughout the country

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## JUNE 2015

Internationally supported peace talks collapsed

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## FEBRUARY 2016

In the UK the parliamentary International Development Committee wrote to the Secretary of State asking for an end of arms sales to Saudi Arabia

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## MARCH 2017

Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) began formal legal proceedings against the UK government

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## DECEMBER 2018

Yemen warring parties agreed a peace deal in Stockholm, known as the Stockholm Agreement

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## FEBRUARY 2019

Oxfam joined the Campaign Against Arms Trade, and other human rights organisations in taking the UK government to the Court of Appeal

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## JUNE 2019

The UK Court of Appeal ruled that the government's decision to continue selling arms to Saudi Arabia was unlawful

## MARCH 2020

Marked 5 years of war in Yemen

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## JULY 2020

The UK Government resumed selling new arms licences to export weapons to Saudi Arabia

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## SEPTEMBER 2020

We handed in our petition to parliament calling for British bombs to stop falling on Yemen

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## MARCH 2021

Marked 6 years of war

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## OCTOBER 2021

The United Nations Human Rights Council announces a decision to withdraw the mandate to the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen (the UN appointed body responsible for monitoring the Human Rights situation in Yemen)

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## DECEMBER 2021

The conflict escalated with increased attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure

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## MARCH 2022

Marked 7 years of war

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## APRIL 2022

A UN-brokered 2 month truce entered into force. This was extended in June and in August



# THE HUMANITARIAN IMPACT

When campaigning you need to understand the context and the reason why we want the UK government to take action. It's important to be clear that Yemen remains one of the world's largest humanitarian crises. The coronavirus is also having a devastating impact on the country and its' people, adding to the impact of seven years of conflict that have destroyed the country's health services. The statistics below are useful to know when campaigning and can also be used as talking points within discussions and social media posts.

## KEY STATISTICS

- Over 4.3 million Yemenis have had to flee their homes
- Since March 2015, UK arms licensed for sale to the Saudi Arabia-led Coalition total over £8.1bn. £16bn in UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia has been made under "open" or unlimited licences
- 6.9 million women need urgent access to gender-based violence services
- Almost 20.1 million people in Yemen don't have access to basic healthcare
- 79% of internally displaced people in Yemen are women and children
- 54% of the population are experiencing acute hunger
- Widespread destruction of the country's health, and water infrastructure have left Yemen acutely vulnerable to the coronavirus. Less than 3% of the population is vaccinated

**STOP  
BRITISH MADE  
BOMBS  
FALLING ON YEMEN**



# OUR CAMPAIGN

A nationwide two-month truce was extended on 2 August 2022. The truce has meant a drop in civilian casualties as airstrikes and ground fighting have significantly reduced – but the truce is fragile. The UK government and others must stop fuelling the conflict by stopping the sale of weapons for use in the war. We as campaigners and activists need to keep up the pressure. When campaigning, it's really important to be clear on what action we want UK politicians to take. We are pushing for an inclusive political solution to the conflict in Yemen. The solution involves:

- Helping secure an immediate end to violence and get all parties to commit to an inclusive peace process
- Stopping UK Arms Sales to the Saudi-led coalition
- Ending attacks on civilians and infrastructure such as health centres, schools, and water sources
- Eliminating obstructions and delays of humanitarian and commercial imports, enabling aid agencies to reach all those in need

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## THE COURT CASES 2019 – 2023: WHAT IS HAPPENING?

Oxfam is providing evidence in a case being brought by Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) against the UK government. CAAT is claiming that the UK is acting unlawfully by licensing arms exports to Saudi Arabia when there is a clear risk they might be used in breach of International Humanitarian Law in Yemen. The case is being heard at the end of January 2023 in the High Court. The outcome we are hoping for would be for the court to rule that sales of arms to Saudi Arabia for use in Yemen are unlawful under UK law and the Arms Trade Treaty, and to order an end to such sales.

This is the second time CAAT has brought this claim. CAAT were successful in their first attempt in June 2019; this is when the Supreme Court ruled that the government acted unlawfully when it licensed arms to Saudi-led forces for use in Yemen without assessing whether or not past incidents amounted to breaches of international law. Following its own internal review which concluded any violations were isolated, the UK government resumed arms sales.



# WHAT YOU CAN DO

March 2022 marked seven years of war in Yemen. University student activists, campaigners, and groups across the UK have sprung into action, calling on the UK government to act. We've come up with some campaigning ideas below to help you think and plan - this is by no means an exhaustive list, so please do be as creative as you like! Remember you can also apply for our Campaigner Fund to help you campaign creatively!

**1**

## **RAISE AWARENESS**

One of the most important things you can do as a campaigner is to raise awareness of an issue. Often, people are simply unaware of what's going on and don't know how to help. Starting those conversations is therefore a great way to begin your campaigning! You could also host a film night, panel discussion, speaker event - there are so many ways to raise awareness!

**2**

## **AMPLIFY YEMENI VOICES**

It is really important that you amplify the voices of the Yemeni community within your campaigning. Are there any local Yemeni groups you can collaborate with? Get in touch with us to host our amazing exhibition showcasing Yemeni business women and their amazing achievements.

**3**

## **HOST A SPOKEN WORD EVENT**

Spoken word is a very powerful form of activism and is a great way to raise awareness and bring together voices that are often ignored within the conflict. Can you collaborate with other groups to deliver an amazing event that brings voices together? Please get in touch with us if you'd like us to share it with the wider network too!

**4**

## **LOBBY DECISION MAKERS**

An important aspect of campaigning is to influence decision makers. One of our key asks is for the UK government to suspend all arms sales to Saudi Arabia, so our MPs need to be made aware of our campaign! Arrange a meeting with your MP, organise a letter writing session, run a petition campaigns stall or give them a call!

**5**

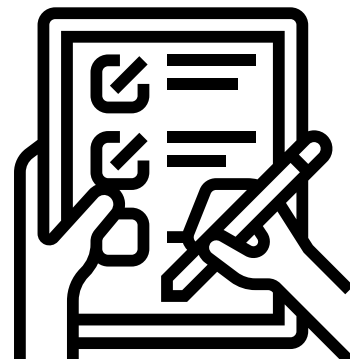
## **STAND IN SOLIDARITY**

There are so many ways to stand in solidarity and show you care about what's happening in Yemen. This could include a film screening, speaker events, candlelight vigils, stunts, campaign stalls... can you meet with your group members and have an ideas session about what is possible?

**6**

## **SPREAD THE MESSAGE**

Spread the message by making the most of getting online! Get in touch with your local student newspaper/media - can you amplify the campaign? You could hold a mass social media hour where your group members directly tweet, call, and email their elected representatives. We know people power works, so make sure your voices are heard!





# USEFUL RESOURCES

Thanks so much for taking action. We must continue to campaign for peace in Yemen, as it is only by taking action that we will create change. Below is a list of resources we can share to support your campaigning, and additional links to help deepen your understanding of the conflict – please do get in touch with Sophie at any point at [smorbey1@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:smorbey1@oxfam.org.uk) if you need any help or support. Remember that we can also send you a Yemen Action Pack with lots of resources for public campaigning, so please do get in touch!

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## General Resources

Yemen posters  
Campaigns Tiles  
T-shirts  
Template letters to send to your MP  
Oxfam branded merchandise

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## Film Suggestions

Short films:  
[comrafilms.com/work/](http://comrafilms.com/work/)  
Badihi:  
[youtube.com/watch?v=LtFSVE4KXQg&feature=youtu.be](https://youtube.com/watch?v=LtFSVE4KXQg&feature=youtu.be)  
Yemen:  
The Silent War

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## Useful Links

BBC:  
[bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-29319423](http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-29319423)  
The Guardian:  
[theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/20/yemen-civil-war-the-conflict-explained](http://theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/20/yemen-civil-war-the-conflict-explained)

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## Oxfam links:

<https://oxfamapps.org/blog/5-things-you-need-to-know-about-the-conflict-in-yemen/>  
<https://oxfamapps.org/blog/remember-yemen-remember-the-war/>  
<https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620909/bp-yemen-gendered-impact-explosive-weapons-261119-en.pdf>

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## Other organisations:

The Campaigns Against the Arms Trade

*Thank  
you!*