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H. E. Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and Leader of the Conservative Party
The Rt. Hon. Theresa May MP

Brussels, 12 April 2018

Dear Prime Minister,

It has been brought to my attention that the Bahraini Prince Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa recently had a meeting with the Chief of Defence Staff of the United Kingdom's Armed Forces, Sir Stuart Peach, in London, which speaks to the partnership and military cooperation between the two countries. In a joint letter addressed to you, dated 4 December 2017, I and other MEPs already raised concerns over this partnership, shedding light on the millions of pounds invested by the UK government on military deals with Bahrain. Military deals are a diplomatic strategy often used by the Gulf States¹, despite their Human Rights record.

Human Rights situation in Bahrain has been deteriorating in the past years, especially regarding freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. The main target is the Shi'a population, and authorities are using force on protestors and mistreating and torturing detainees (of which several refugees accuse Prince Nasser). Numerous NGOs have been reporting on this, even though their access to the country is difficult because Bahrain denies them access (including to United Nations representatives). The Foreign and Commonwealth Office also assessed Bahrain's serious Human Rights situation, listing it as a "Human Rights Priority Country".

Moreover, Bahrain's implication in the Yemeni war, a war that has created a humanitarian disaster, cannot be ignored when selling weapons to this country.

In light of these facts, I urge the UK government to reconsider its military deals with a country that does not respect Human Rights. These are not sustainable and only contribute to the destabilisation of the region, especially in Yemen. Furthermore, I hope that the UK government takes advantage of the good relationship it has with Bahrain to ensure that the country will comply with Human Rights.

Best regards
Ana Gomes

Ana Gomes
Member of the European Parliament

¹ <https://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21737526-they-have-agreed-arms-deals-worth-billions-dollars-past-year>

