

Rally at Electro Optic Systems Head Office, Elizabeth Street, Sydney August 8, 2019 in opposition to their support for Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates in the war on Yemen. This rally takes place every second Thursday of the month.



Members of WILPF



Dr Hannah Middleton and singers



Former Senator Lee Rhiannon



Warwick from MUA Union

Notes for speech outside Electro Optic Systems (EOS) August 8, 2019

In the eyes of some war making is sacrosanct. Pope Francis: Countries that sell arms have no right to talk about peace. In April he said that nations that actively engage in arms dealing and help foment war in other countries cannot find peace in their own lands. Those that sell arms 'have no right to talk about peace. Pope Francis: It is hypocritical and contradictory to speak of peace, to negotiate peace, whilst fueling an arms trade that only serves the 'merchants of death,' exacerbates wars to benefit the weapons industry. What we have before our eyes is the misery and death that weapons bring. The United Nations calls Yemen the world's worst humanitarian crisis with more than 10 million Yemenis risk imminent starvation. The Pope said, 'There is no alternative: we will either build the future together or there will not be a future,' said Francis.

Tomorrow (The August 9) one year ago an attack against children where a US-supplied bomb killed 40 boys on a bus in Yemen. Since then, on average, at least one child has been killed every day- not to mention the struggle against hunger and disease. Australia is deeply implicated in the appalling carnage in Yemen. We have to do what we can to demand an end to this complicity with the UYS. Australia must halt arms sales to countries involved in the Yemen war. As we support arms dealers, more than 10 million people are facing famine.

Oxfam Australia has called on the Australian Government to provide more humanitarian aid for the response. 70 years after the creation of the Geneva Convention, which seeks to protect civilians in and around war zones, children in Yemen are still in the firing line. Our task should be to focus on the protection of the lives of Yemeni civilians, ending the war, and certainly not profiting from it through arms sales.

The Department of Defence said all applications to export military goods are subject to a rigorous risk assessment process that takes into account Australia's international obligations.

'This includes the Arms Trade Treaty, and the impact the export could have on foreign policy, human rights, national security and regional security.' Assessment within the Arms Trade Treaty considers whether there is an overriding risk that the exported items could be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law or human rights law.

EOS is an evil corporation as it shamelessly attempts to camouflage its profiting from human slaughter in response to reports and investigations that expose its attempt to sell weapons systems in the Middle East – almost certainly to UAE and /or Saudi Arabia – countries presently involved in terrible war crimes in Yemen. Its one ***point of denial is that does not make weapons***. Are we supposed to laugh or cry? Its own website proudly displays an armoured vehicle with a large machine gun on top. The system to operate this machine gun, is EOS's biggest seller, a RWS (Remote Weapons System) generated by EOS.

In 2018, our Federal government announced a staggering \$3.8Billion loan fund to increase our share of the international arms trade. Let's not delude ourselves and think that ALP does not also support this trade in death. We have seen retiring ALP government ministers receiving a cushy position as a Defence **Industry Advocate, joined the EOS board in March 2018 and holding shares in EOS** valued today at just under half a million dollars. A cushy job at tax payers' expense on retiring from parliament? Corporations like EOS do not have to disclose who they are selling their weapons to.

In Yemen, one child dies every 10 minutes due to malnutrition and preventable illnesses, with an estimated 85,000 children dying since the start of the conflict nearly four years ago. How much more can the children of Yemen endure? The hardships that children face are a direct consequence of an avoidable and unnecessary conflict that has engulfed this largely forgotten country.

Before the war, Yemen was a bucket-list destination for adventurous travellers. Now it's one of the most dangerous places on Earth for children. And the casualties of this senseless conflict go far beyond the physical injuries that children sustain during the fighting and airstrikes, and the emergence of preventable communicable diseases such as cholera and diphtheria, which are made worse by a health system under extraordinary stress.

A generation of children have had their childhoods ripped out from under them with the loss of access to education. Their future and the future of Yemen is in peril. And what about the distress,

trauma and mental health of children who have witnessed extreme violence and bloodshed? How will children recover once the weapons are finally downed?

Australian funds have been used to provide children and families with access to clean water and food, and to help prevent the spread of cholera. What is more than concerning is that our government has been unwilling to disclose details of its military exports to parties to the conflict like Saudi Arabia, who have been accused of committing serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law against civilians, including children.

The supply of weapons, from some of the richest countries, has helped fuel the war these past four years, elevating the conflict to an even greater level of horror for children.

It is unacceptable to provide humanitarian funding with one hand and issuing defence export licenses. Australia must follow the example of countries such as Belgium, Norway, Germany and the Netherlands, and cease military export licenses to Saudi Arabia – or any country. Australian doctors and other health professionals have expressed outrage at our complicity with humanitarian suffering in Yemen. 'Our government has abandoned any sense of ethical responsibility. The failure to acknowledge the role of Australian weapons sales in perpetuating the human catastrophe in Yemen is unsustainable.' Trading in arms with the actors in Yemen must stop now.

