



# Committees on Arms Export Controls

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
Tel. 020 7219 8092 E-mail: [caecom@parliament.uk](mailto:caecom@parliament.uk)  
Web: [www.parliament.uk/caec](http://www.parliament.uk/caec)

Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP  
Secretary of State  
Department for International Trade  
King Charles Street  
Whitehall  
London SW1A 2AH

8 September 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

The Committees on Arms Export Controls (CAEC) reconvened and met on 6 July, when it selected me as their new Chair. There had been a number of important developments since CAEC last met, not least the merger of two of the four Government departments which together considered arms export licences. We decided to hold initial public evidence sessions to examine developments and issues across the arms export control agenda, beginning with a session with the head of the Export Control Joint Unit.

Your officials responded by proposing instead that the Minister for International Trade, Ranil Jayawardena, would give evidence. We very much welcomed this, and his appearance on 16 September was agreed with your officials at the end of July.

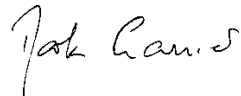
On 1 September we were told that neither the minister nor his officials would be able to give evidence before the publication of the 2019 strategic export controls annual report, which was likely to be in December.

We are disappointed by this late change. Scrutiny of the annual report lies at the heart of CAEC's remit and we look forward to discharging that duty when the latest report is published. However, it has been over a year since CAEC last met and it is important that the Committees establish the current playing-field before we embark on the detailed scrutiny of the report. Indeed, there are specific issues that require government accountability and parliamentary scrutiny, including:

- The consequences for the arms export control system of the DfID/FCO merger.
- The work that was done by DIT/ECJU as a result of the CAAT Appeal Court judgment in June 2018, including the review of then-existing licence cases, the Jonathan Mills review of the licencing system and the changes flowing from that, and the basis for the decision to recommence licences for Saudi exports.
- The current situation on arms export controls in relation to specific countries, not just to Saudi Arabia but also to Hong Kong, Turkey and other countries as cases of conflict or unrest arise.
- Processing and/or enforcement delays in the arms export control system, including as a result of the reviews after the Court judgment and because of Covid-19.
- Any consequences of Brexit for arms export controls, including potential for deviation from the existing EU-based 'Consolidated Criteria' rules and information-sharing arrangements.

I am sure you would agree that an early meeting of CAEC and DIT witnesses would signal an enthusiasm and willingness on the part of DIT to engage with Parliament over the issue of arms exports. I would be grateful if you could reconsider witnesses appearing before the publication of the annual report.

It would be helpful if we could have your response before 16 September — the date originally scheduled for the minister's evidence. It would also be helpful if you could provide an explanation for the long delay in publishing the 2019 annual report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Garnier'.

**Mark Garnier MP**  
**Chair**