



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Nicola Sturgeon
First Minister
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

1 January 2019

Dear Nicola,

Funding to Companies involved in the Arms Trade

As you are aware, the Scottish Green MSPs have consistently raised the issues of Scottish Government funding going to companies involved in the arms trade. Your government has also recently introduced new guidance on human rights checks to be carried out on companies set to receive public funds, though it remains unclear what impact that new guidance will have on companies involved in the arms trade.

You will also be aware that an unambiguous fascist has been inaugurated president of Brazil, a fascist who has made many public statements glorifying violence against opponents and has lamented that the previous military dictatorship in his country did not kill enough people. It is not unlikely that we will witness an increase in use of deadly force against the civilian population in Brazil, particularly against marginalised groups such as the indigenous & LGBTI+ and trade union movement.

The company Chemring Energetics, based in North Ayrshire, has received £196,355 from Scottish Enterprise over the last 10 years. Chemring Energetics describes itself as a leading supplier of detonators, actuators, rocket motors, high explosive charges, high explosives, and demolition stores. They target Brazil as a growth market and in 2015 had applied for a licence to export military use explosives to Brazil.

I appreciate that the responsibility to police export licences for arms is the responsibility of the UK Government. Your MPs in Westminster have been actively pressuring the UK Government to halt

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arms exports to Saudi Arabia, where there are clear links to war crimes and human rights abuses. We both know that the UK Government is unlikely to act here.

Your justification for public funding to arms companies has been that the Government is supporting diversification into non-military markets. I believed this to be flawed. Many of the companies who have received funding from Scottish Enterprise are primarily focused on the manufacture of arms, and have clearly identified growth strategies for this purpose. Subsidising the branch of the company that is focused on civilian markets only allows these companies to divert more of their own investment towards arms. It does not in any way reduce their activities in the arms trade.

Further, supporting arms companies to expand into blue light markets, as you told Patrick Harvie during FMQs in April, also raises concerns. The blue light market includes the police. In 2014, the Hong Kong police used tear gas against pro-democracy protestors. In 2011, the Egyptian police used teargas against Arab Spring protestors. In both instances, the teargas had been supplied by Chemring.

Scottish Government financial support to arms companies cannot be disentangled from the abuses carried out using these companies' products.

Given the above, can you confirm whether or not the new human rights checks introduced for companies receiving Scottish Government funding will prevent further funding going to companies involved in the arms trade? Specifically, will these new checks stop funding going to companies who supply arms to Brazil?

Best Wishes,



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