

Dutch Parliament Calls for Arms Embargo on Saudi Arabia Over Yemen War

Landmark resolution is the first of its kind to be passed in a national parliament since the EU parliament called for an arms sales freeze

By [Middle East Eye](#)

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The parliament of the Netherlands on Tuesday passed a landmark resolution calling on the government to stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia, saying it was “guilty of violating international humanitarian law in Yemen”.

The resolution was tabled by the Labour Party, a member of the ruling coalition, and follows a [historic vote](#) in the EU parliament at the end of February.

In that vote, 359 MEPs supported a bill demanding a complete arms embargo on Saudi Arabia, with 212 voting against.

The Dutch resolution references a report prepared by a UN panel of experts that was leaked in January, which found that 119 sorties carried out by the Saudi-led coalition had violated international law.



Bystanders look on at the carnage following a suicide car bombing in the Yemeni city of Aden (AFP)

Tuesday’s resolution is the first vote to take place in a national parliament since EU

politicians called for the arms embargo.

A majority of MEPs called on EU High Representative Federica Mogherini to:

“launch an initiative aimed at imposing an EU arms embargo against Saudi Arabia, given the serious allegations of breaches of international humanitarian law by Saudi Arabia in Yemen”.

Hours after the Dutch parliament passed the resolution, eye-witnesses said jets from the Saudi-led coalition struck a civilian [market](#) in north-western Yemen, killing up to 100 people according to Houthi sources.

Saudi Arabia has repeatedly denied allegations that its coalition has been involved in strikes causing massive numbers of civilian casualties, including several at weddings, markets and a camp for internally-displaced people.

However, following the leaking of the critical UN report, military commanders said they would launch their own investigation into alleged violations of international law.

Following Tuesday’s vote, Amnesty International’s senior political affairs officer in The Netherlands, Youssef Rahman, said he hoped the Dutch resolution would set a precedent for other European states to begin halting arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

“Over the last year there has been mounting scrutiny of the way Saudi Arabia is fighting the deadly war in Yemen, and of the legal obligations of countries who sell and transit arms to Saudi Arabia,” Rahman said in a statement.

“We are hopeful that this vote in the Netherlands will be the first of many similar votes in other European countries.”

In 2008, the Dutch government said it had a “restrictive” arms policy towards Saudi Arabia, citing human rights concerns. But between 2001 and 2010, the Netherlands sold arms to Saudi Arabia valued at around \$43 million.

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