

Human Rights Group Says UK Shamefully Evading Responsibility for Yemen Deaths



London, June 7 (RHC)-- Amnesty International has dismissed as "utterly shameful" the United Kingdom's claims that no British-made cluster bombs have been used by Saudis against civilians in Yemen. Recently, British Minister for Defense Procurement Philip Dunne said no UK-supplied cluster weapons have been used in the current conflict in Yemen.

"It is utterly shameful that the British government has sought to evade responsibility, denying the use of UK-supplied cluster munitions in Yemen by the Saudi Arabia-led coalition despite comprehensive and compelling evidence gathered by Amnesty International on the ground," said Amnesty's senior crisis response adviser Lama Fakih.

Evidence provided by Amnesty in late May showed that Saudi Arabia had used British "BL-755" cluster bombs in an attack on the remote village of al-Khadhra in Yemen's Hajjah province.

"By failing to launch an urgent investigation into the use of British-made cluster munitions, the UK government is demonstrating a callous indifference to the lives of civilians in Yemen," Fakih said. She said Britain should be calling on Riyadh to "cease all use of cluster weapons and urging them to

immediately provide the UN with precise locations of cluster munition attacks in order to facilitate clearance and to warn civilians about the risks."

Each "BL-755" bomb has a cluster of 147 little bombs inside that scatter over a wide area when dropped. Some do not explode until agitated by unsuspecting civilians when they take their toll.

Amnesty said the cluster bombs used by Saudi Arabia have killed and wounded at least 16 civilians, including nine children, between July 2015 and May 2016.

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