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27th July 2020

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

Dear Ms Truss

Immediate Suspension of the Export Licence for Small Arms to the USA

At the Full Council meeting on 13 July 2020, Saffron Walden Town Council unanimously resolved to demand that the export licence for small arms to the USA be immediately suspended as, in accordance with the current arms export control regime, the government must not grant licences for the export of equipment that might be used for internal repression.

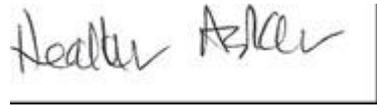
In this current year the Department of International Trade has licensed the export of a variety of riot control weapons and equipment to the USA including anti-riot guns, tear gas, batons and riot shields.

Following the second-degree murder of George Floyd by Officer Derek Chauven, who had 18 complaints in his 19 years' service and received just two letters of reprimand. The brutal and widespread use of force on Black Lives Matter protesters and non-aligned supporters, and including gratuitous 'pepper' spraying of journalists merely observing demonstrations has clearly been both excessive and repressive.

During the post-Civil War Reconstruction Period 1865-1877 old style slave patrols (who were equipped with guns and whips to capture and punish runaway slaves) were merged with southern police officers and Klan members. This goes some way to explain the horrendous tally of African Americans killed with seeming impunity by police officers.

This historic bias is exacerbated by the atmosphere of heightened violence under the current US administration and so we conclude unreservedly that repression is highly likely to continue and therefore join our voice to the over 166 MPs and over 847,000 petitioners to demand the cessation of the export of small arms to the USA immediately.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Heather Asker", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Councillor Heather Asker
Mayor of Saffron Walden Town Council