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## UK Court Sides with Government in Controversial Arms Case Linked to Israel

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LONDON, July 5, 2025 A British court has dismissed a legal challenge brought by two human rights organizations aiming to stop the United Kingdom from supplying parts for F-35 fighter jets that are used by Israel. The ruling has sparked fresh debate over the country's role in global arms trading, particularly amid the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

The case was brought forward by the Palestinian organization Al-Haq and the UK-based Global Legal Action Network (GLAN). They argued that the UK government was breaching both domestic and international law by continuing to allow the export of components that are eventually used in Israeli military aircraft. These parts, they claimed, may be contributing to potential violations of international humanitarian law.

The heart of the argument centered on the UK's involvement in producing components for the F-35 stealth fighter jet, a high-tech aircraft developed through a global partnership led by the United States and involving seven other countries, including the UK. Parts manufactured in Britain are sent to assembly plants in the United States, Italy, and Japan before being delivered to partner nations, including Israel.

Last year, the UK government suspended roughly 30 of 350 existing arms export licenses for equipment potentially used in the Gaza conflict. These included parts for drones and helicopters. However, components linked to the F-35 program were exempt from this freeze. According to the government, these parts are part of a long-standing international defense agreement and are not directly supplied to Israel.

The High Court judges, Justices Stephen Males and Karen Ste, sided with the government, stating that decisions regarding arms exports in the context of national defense fall under the responsibility of the executive branch, not the judiciary. In a 72-page ruling, they emphasized that such politically sensitive matters should be decided by Parliament, not the courts.

“Under our constitution, that acutely sensitive and political issue is a matter for the executive, which is democratically accountable to Parliament and ultimately to the electorate,” the judgment read.

Critics argue that the ruling creates a troubling loophole allowing the UK to remain part of an international supply chain while distancing itself from how its parts are used in conflict zones. Campaign groups like the Campaign Against Arms Trade estimate that British firms supply around 15% of the components in the F-35, including its advanced laser targeting systems.

While the UK's arms exports to Israel are modest compared to major suppliers like the United States and Germany, this case has drawn attention to the ethical and legal complexities of modern arms trading, especially in times of war.

For human rights advocates, the fight is far from over. But for now, the courts have spoken — and the government's defense partnerships remain intact.

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