

Judges Dismiss Case Challenging UK's Role in Supplying Arms Parts to Israel

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— Categories: Human Rights



UK judges have dismissed a legal challenge brought by a Palestinian human rights organization that sought to halt the government's involvement in the supply of arms components used in Israeli military operations. The case, led by Al-Haq, argued that the UK was acting unlawfully by continuing to permit the export of parts used in F-35 fighter jets, which have been deployed by Israel in the Gaza conflict. The group

claimed the government was violating international humanitarian law and its export controls by allowing these transfers to continue amid ongoing violence in the region.

However, the High Court ruled that the UK government acted within its legal authority, emphasizing that decisions regarding arms exports fall under the discretion of ministers, not the judiciary. The judgment concluded that while the situation in Gaza is deeply troubling, the court could not override the government's assessment of whether there is a clear risk that weapons might be used in serious violations of international law.

The legal action focused specifically on the UK's role in a multinational F-35 program, where it supplies components later integrated into fighter jets used by several allied countries, including Israel. The court found that the UK's indirect contribution did not meet the legal threshold for halting exports, particularly given that the jets are not supplied directly to the Israeli government by the UK.

The ruling was met with disappointment from Al-Haq and supporting human rights campaigners, who argue that the UK's arms export system lacks transparency and fails to account for the humanitarian impact of its defense industry. They maintain that continuing arms transfers, even indirectly, undermine the UK's stated commitment to upholding international law and human rights.

In response, the UK government reiterated that all export licenses are subject to rigorous checks and are consistent with domestic law and international obligations. Officials stressed that the arms control system remains robust and that export decisions are continuously reviewed in

light of unfolding developments. While the case has now been dismissed, the debate over the UK's role in global arms trade and its ethical responsibilities remains far from settled.