

Report reveals UK has flown 200 spy missions over Gaza, complicit in Israeli war crimes

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This file photo shows a British Shadow R1 spy plane in flight. (Photo by the Royal Air Force)

London, May 10 (RHC)-- A newly-released report has revealed that the UK military has flown 200 spy missions over Gaza in support of Israel, adding that the International Criminal Court (ICC) should investigate British officials over complicity in war crimes.

"The Royal Air Force (RAF) has flown 200 surveillance flights over Gaza since December, it can be revealed," Declassified UK, an investigative journalism organization, said in a report on Wednesday.

Noting that the flights have taken off from the UK's sprawling air base on Cyprus, RAF Akrotiri, and have been in the air for about six hours, the organization said the RAF has likely "gathered around 1,000 hours" of footage over Gaza.

One of the flights was in the air on April 1st when Israel killed seven aid workers working for the World Central Kitchen, including three Britons, in airstrike on central Gaza, the report said.

On that day, "a UK spy plane departed Akrotiri at 5 p.m. local time and arrived back at the base at 10:49 p.m. The Israeli airstrikes are believed to have taken place soon after 10:30 p.m."

The new information comes as the International Criminal Court (ICC) is considering issuing arrest warrants for Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his ministers in the wake of their months-long genocidal war against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip.

"British officials could also face prosecution for complicity in war crimes, including Defense Secretary Grant Shapps," Declassified said.

The UK Ministry of Defense announced on December 2nd that it would begin spy flights over Gaza to supposedly locate captives held by the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas in Gaza. "But the extraordinary number of flights, and the fact that they started nearly two months after the hostages were taken, raises suspicions that the UK is not collecting intelligence solely for this purpose."

The organization noted that Shadow R1, a UK spy plane, also landed in Israel on February 13th before flying back to the UK base in Cyprus, saying: "The purpose of the visit is unclear."

"Israeli forces are also on the ground in Gaza, and notoriously have wide-ranging surveillance capabilities in the territory. It is unclear what Britain's R1s can add to the hostage rescue mission."

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