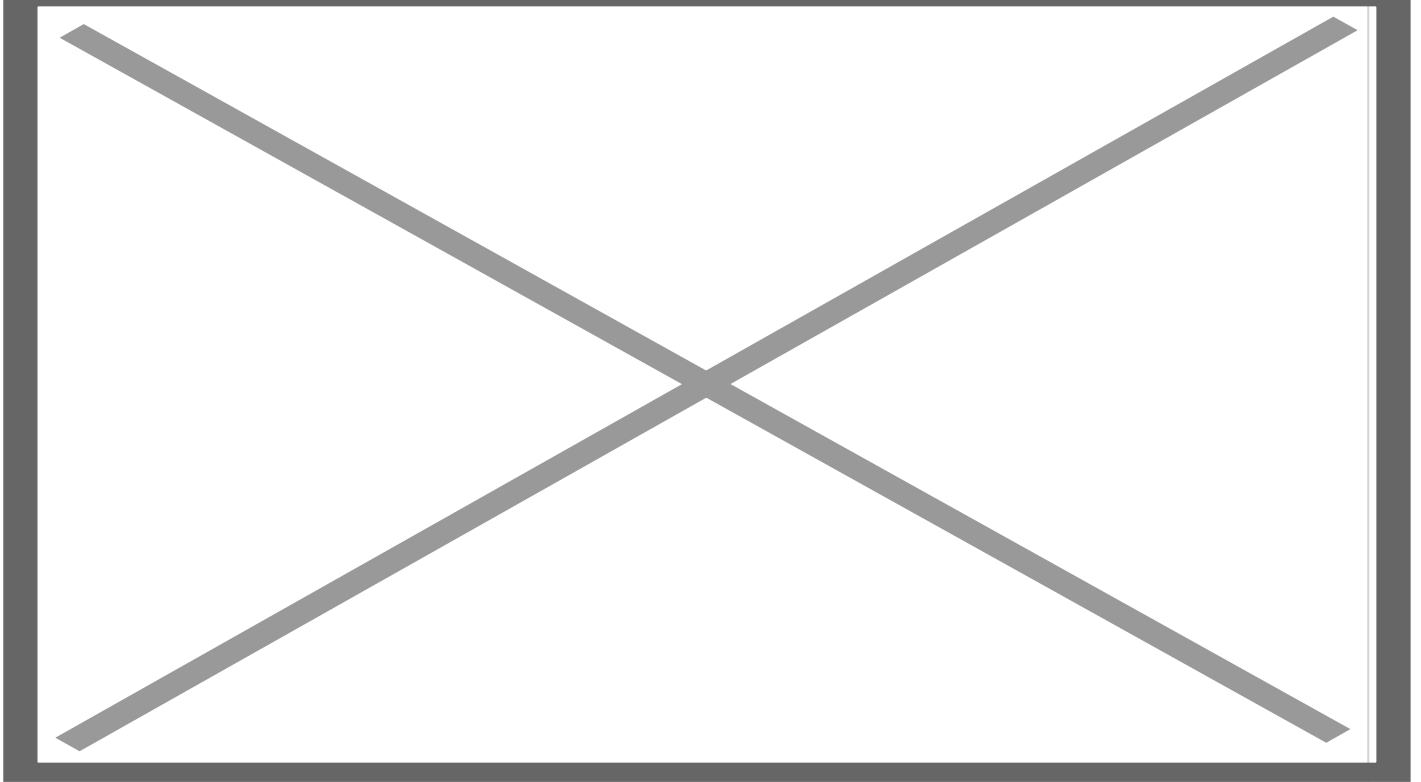


Pro-Palestinian groups sue Dutch government for failing to stop Gaza genocide

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The NGOs want the Netherlands to ban the export and transit of weapons, weapon parts, and dual-use items to Israel.

Amsterdam, November 22 (RHC)-- Pro-Palestinian organisations have taken the Dutch state to court, urging a halt to arms exports to Israel and accusing the government of failing to prevent what they termed a “genocide” in Gaza.

They argue that the Netherlands, a staunch ally of Israel, has a legal obligation to do everything in its power to stop violations of international law and the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention, in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank.

“Today, the plaintiffs are here to hold the Dutch state accountable for failing to comply with international law by failing to intervene against violations of the rights of the Palestinian people committed by the state of Israel,” Wout Albers, a lawyer representing the coalition, said at a civil court in The Hague on Friday.

“Israel is guilty of genocide and apartheid” and “is using Dutch weapons to wage war”, Albers added.

The plaintiffs comprise a coalition of Dutch and Palestinian organisations working to defend human rights in the Palestinian territory, with three of the groups in Palestine.

In October, the groups requested the court to “include a ban on the export and transit of weapons, weapon parts, and dual-use items to Israel as well as a ban on all Dutch trade and investment relations that help maintain Israel’s unlawful occupation of Palestinian territory.”

Reporting from The Hague, Al Jazeera’s Step Vaessen said while the court is “looking into whether the [Dutch] state should be obliged to stop sending weapons, the state says that this decision is not up to the court to decide and is foreign policy”.

Judge Sonja Hoekstra noted: “It is important to underline that the gravity of the situation in Gaza is not contested by the Dutch state, nor is the status of the West Bank.” But she said it was about “finding out what is legally in play and what can be expected” of the government. She acknowledged it was a “sensitive case.”

Albers said: “Today is not about judging political choices, but about ensuring fundamental respect for the international rule of law and protection against violations of international law.”

According to Vaessen, the groups’ demands build on previous decisions by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which earlier this year ruled that the occupation of Palestine is illegal.

On Thursday, the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague issued arrest warrants for Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant and Hamas’s military commander Mohammed Deif for alleged “war crimes and crimes against humanity.”

Dutch Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp said his country “respects the independence of the ICC.” “We won’t engage in non-essential contacts and we will act on the arrest warrants. We fully comply with the Rome Statute of the ICC,” he added.

It is unclear how far the case brought by the pro-Palestinian groups will go, as the Supreme Court has dismissed several earlier attempts to hold the Netherlands to its obligations to prevent alleged violations of the Genocide Convention.

This suit also builds on the outcome of an earlier case which saw a court ordering the government in February to block all exports of F-35 fighter jet parts to Israel over concerns they were being used to violate international law.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/internacionales/370309-pro-palestinian-groups-sue-dutch-government-for-failing-to-stop-gaza-genocide>



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