

Dutch court clears delivery of F-35 parts used by Israel in Gaza war

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The Hague, December 17 (RHC)-- A court in the Netherlands has rejected a case brought by a group of human rights organizations to block the delivery of parts for F-35 fighter jets used by Israel in the Gaza

Strip, giving the Dutch government the green light to keep supplying the Israeli regime with the controversial military parts.

The organizations, including the local branch of Amnesty International, had made a plea in the district court in The Hague earlier this month. Human rights lawyers warned that supplying the parts contributed to violations of international law by Israel in its bombardment of the Gaza Strip.

"The considerations that the [defense] minister makes are to a large extent of a political and policy nature and judges should leave the minister a large amount of freedom," said the verdict.

The judges acknowledged that it was likely that F-35s contributed to possible war crimes in Gaza, but that under the terms of the arms export permit, they could only rule on the question of whether the government had made a reasonable assessment in allowing exports to continue and said there was no scope for a judge to intervene.

"To everyone who has seen the images of the armed conflict [in Gaza], reads the news coverage about them ... it seems evident that there are violations of humanitarian law," the verdict said.

Amnesty International, Oxfam Novib and The Rights Forum have made a plea in the district court in The Hague.

Lawyers for the rights groups said they would almost certainly appeal against the court decision. "We were successful in the sense that the claims by the state that there were no violations in Gaza, or we can't assess that, has been wiped off the table and (the finding) that the F-35 is used in the war is extremely important," said lawyer Liesbeth Zegveld.

The F-35 parts, owned by the United States, are stored in a warehouse at Woensdrecht Air Base in the Netherlands.

These warplane parts "make it possible for real bombs to be dropped on real houses and on real families," said Michiel Servaes, director of the Dutch affiliate of Oxfam.

Weeks after Israel waged its war on Gaza, the Dutch government approved the delivery of spare parts, according to government records.

Israel started its relentless bombardment of Gaza on October 7th after Hamas launched the surprise Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the occupying regime. In the event, Netanyahu ordered Israeli military forces to attack the besieged Gaza Strip with a force "like never before."

The regime's forces have so far killed more than 19,000, the Health Ministry said. Two-thirds of those killed in Gaza are women and children.

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