

Spain remains major transit port for arms shipments to Israel

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Madrid, February 21 (RHC)-- Thousands of weapon shipments have been arriving in Tel Aviv via Spain for over 16 months, despite a ban on arms exports imposed by Madrid last year.

Media reports citing an investigation said that over 60,000 weapon parts had been transported to Israel via Zaragoza airport in northern Spain since the start of the U.S.–Israeli genocide of Palestinians in

October 2023.

The shipments had continued unimpeded despite a ban on arms exports to Israel imposed by Madrid four months ago. "The evidence indicates that these flights continue to this day," investigators said. They stated that the shipments include "parts and accessories for artillery, rifles, rocket/grenade launchers and machine guns" and "parts and accessories for revolvers and pistols."

The arms route was detected using information from Israeli customs and flight tracking data.

Investigators identified at least six airlines operating these flights.

"Three of them, Challenge Air Cargo, National Air Cargo, and Atlas Air, had already been reported to be used to transport military cargo to Israel, chartered by the United States. Such flights have been documented from multiple U.S. air bases, including Sigonella in Italy and Al-Udeid in Qatar," the report highlights.

In response to the revelations, Spain's left-wing Podemos Party in a statement strongly censured the government following the revelations. "After the lie with the ports, we now have this with Zaragoza airport. We demand that the government stop lying and act coherently: a total arms embargo and an end to relations with the genocidal" Israeli entity, the party said.

UN Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories, Francesca Albanese also on Thursday implored the Spanish government, who has been an increasingly visible champion in defense of international law, to stop any military flights to Israel. "Israel's genocide against the Palestinian people must not be enabled by Spanish land and labor," she said.

However, the Spanish Foreign Ministry said that officials "[have] not authorized any transit through Spanish airports of defense material destined for Israel," adding that "no arms sales operations to Israel have been authorized either."

In December, a media report revealed that Washington sent over a thousand tons of ammunition to Israel on a ship that docked at a U.S. naval base in Spain.

"Shipments through American military bases in Spain of military materials, which may be used in the commission of international crimes, are harder to detect," Spanish lawmaker Enrique Santiago back then said.

The joint investigation was conducted by Progressive International (PI), the Palestinian Youth Movement, and the American Friends Service Committee. The report comes despite Madrid's embargo on vessels carrying military cargo bound for the Israeli regime.

In June, Spain submitted a Declaration of Intervention to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the case brought by South Africa against Israel regarding the application of the Genocide.

[SOURCE: PRESS TV and NEWS AGENCIES]

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