

Protesters in Switzerland Slam Drone Deal with Israeli Regime



Geneva, May 28 (RHC)-- Swiss activists have held a protest against a deal between Switzerland and the Tel Aviv regime for the purchase of Israeli drones. The protesters in the central eastern city of Thun took part in the demonstration against the purchase of Hermes 900 drones from the Israeli company Elbit Systems, according to the Group for a Switzerland without an Army, known by its Swiss acronym, GSoA.

The activists also blocked the entrance to one of Switzerland's largest military bases in Thun, where a war drones presentation had been planned to take place. On July 5, 2014, the Federal Office for Defense Procurement of Switzerland announced the selection of the Hermes 900 Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). The first drones of the contract, which is worth an estimated USD 280 million, are expected in Switzerland by 2017.

The activists called on the members of parliament to reject the deal, which has been approved by the government. "This deal would be a direct contribution to war crimes," said Jannik Böhm, one of the activists, adding: "It is a shame that Switzerland plans to contribute technology to violations of international humanitarian law -- instead of preventing them from taking place."

The Israeli regime uses its drones mainly in attacks against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The Electronic Intifada, an online publication, has said that an Israeli Hermes drone killed a 12-year-old boy in an attack on Gaza in June 2012.

According to a report, released in 2014 by the London-based charity War on Want, more than 820 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli drone attacks since 2006. Human Rights Watch has also condemned the Israeli drone attacks on Palestinians.

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