

Rights groups target France over weapons link to Yemen war

20 Mar 2018

20
MAR
2018

Tweet

0

Like

G+

0

Share



AFP / Ahmad AL-BASHA

War has inflicted a devastating toll on Yemen's children

The exports would likely "constitute a violation by France" of the UN's Arms Trade Treaty and the EU's Common Position on Arms Export, said the report commissioned by Amnesty International and French anti-torture group Acat.

More than 9,300 people, many of them civilians, have been killed since 2015 in the brutal Yemeni war pitting Iran-backed Huthi rebels against the Saudi-led coalition.

Saudi Arabia is a major buyer of Western weapons and European governments have come under pressure from NGOs over fears their arms could potentially be implicated in war crimes in Yemen.

Norway has suspended arms exports to the United Arab Emirates, while in Germany, the coalition agreement of Chancellor Angela Merkel's new government says no weapons will be supplied to countries involved in the conflict.

France, one of the world's biggest arms exporters, has sold equipment to Riyadh and fellow coalition member the United Arab Emirates -- notably Caesar artillery guns and ammunition, sniper rifles and armoured vehicles.

A foreign ministry spokeswoman insisted Tuesday that "France has a robust and transparent system of controls on exports of weapons of war".

"Export decisions are taken under the prime minister with strict respect for France's international commitments," the spokeswoman added.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe's office said this month that French land weapons sold to Riyadh were "defensive" and being used on the ground in Saudi to deter Huthi attacks.

"The Emiratis are on the ground in Yemen with some French equipment but it is not these weapons that are implicated in the collateral damage which must stop," Philippe's office added.

"The surveillance measures around the Yemen question... has been strongly reinforced in recent months."

Amnesty blasted what it said was a lack of transparency over how French weapons end up being used by Arab importers, saying it was "imperative that parliament debates French arms sales and takes control of them."

Two other French NGOs, Aser and Droit Solidarite, will take the government to court for failing to respect international agreements if it does not suspend its export licences, Aser chief Benoit Muracciole said.

[BACK TO SUMMARY](#)

[NEXT](#)

The global network of Agence France Presse covers 151 countries

[Find out more](#)

[Find out more](#)

Contact us

If you have news to share or a question, comment or suggestion, contact us via...

MAIL

FACEBOOK

TWITTER



SUBSIDIARIES

AFP GMBH

SPORT INFORMATIONS
DIENST

AFP-SERVICES

[About AFP](#)

[Useful links](#)

[Our Blog](#)