

UK Sells ‘Invasive Surveillance Equipment’ to Saudi Arabia



London, January 28 (RHC)-- Britain has approved the sale of invasive surveillance equipment to Saudi Arabia, amid an outcry over the Al Saud's human rights violations, a new report says.

The report by The Independent mentioned Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates as some of the licensed importers of such equipment. The items reportedly include devices to detect cell phones, and intercept messages and calls sent through them, also known as IMSI (International Mobile Subscriber Identity) catchers, and IP monitoring systems to monitor a country's entire internet.

"These categories of surveillance technology... would allow some of the most authoritarian countries in the world to carry out mass, suspicion-less surveillance and gain unlimited access to anyone's private communications and devices," said Edin Omanovic, a research officer at the UK-based Privacy International charity.

"Such surveillance technology can be used to clamp down on dissent through the monitoring of activists, journalists and opposition groups, as well as allow agencies to identify and target individuals and carry out serious human rights abuses, including arbitrary killings and torture," he added.

The UK government is boosting the sale of military hardware and software to Riyadh irrespective of the international outcry over the Saudi military aggression against Yemen, which has killed over 8,300 since

late March last year. London is also under fire for denying all claims against Saudi Arabia's human rights records.

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