

Dutch judge slaps ban on Samsung smartphones

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A South Korea shop manager shows Samsung Electronics' Galaxy S mobile phone (R) and Apple's iPhone 3G (L) at a shop in Seoul in 2010. A Dutch judge on Wednesday banned the sale of three smartphones built by Samsung in several European countries in the latest blow to the South Korean electronics giant from rival Apple.

A Dutch judge on Wednesday banned the sale of three smartphones built by Samsung in several European countries in the latest blow to the South Korean electronics giant from rival Apple.

"Samsung's smart phones cannot be sold. That goes for the Samsung S, the Samsung S II and the Samsung Ace," Saskia Panchoe, spokeswoman for the Hague-based court told AFP.

The court banned sales from mid-October onwards.

US-based Apple filed papers before the Dutch court on June 27, asking for an injunction on sales of three smartphone models and three tablet models including Samsung's newly-released Galaxy Tab 10.1, accusing the Asian manufacturer of infringing on its design and patents.

"The court has judged that there indeed was an infringement regarding the smartphones, but not in relation to the tablets, which can still be sold," Panchoe added.

"The patents also apply to other (European) countries, which means the ban on sales applies to other countries where the patents are valid," the spokeswoman said, but she could not state the exact countries.

The infringements relate to the way users scrolled through photo galleries on their devices and how phones were unlocked by touching its screens.

A trial on the merits of the case is not expected before 2012, while other summary proceedings on several phone models are to be considered by the Hague-based tribunal in September.

The case before the Dutch court is the latest episode in the battle between Samsung and Apple, manufacturer of the iPad, who have been pursuing legal action against one another since April over design rights.

A German court earlier this month lifted a European ban on the sales of the Galaxy Tab 10.1 tablet, while keeping it in place in Germany, as Apple pursued a separate case there.

Earlier this month, Apple also launched legal proceedings in Australia against Samsung, accusing it of infringing its patents with the Galaxy Tab 10.1.

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