

Rights group sues UK over exports of spying tech

April 16 2013, by Raphael Satter

A human rights group is suing the British government over the export of sophisticated surveillance technology that has been used to spy on dissidents in Bahrain and elsewhere.

Privacy International said Tuesday it had filed a lawsuit before London's High Court over the government's refusal to say whether it was investigating U.K.-based Gamma International, whose FinFisher software has been linked to use in more than two dozen countries, including Bahrain, Egypt, Ethiopia, Turkmenistan and Vietnam.

The export of Western [surveillance software](#) to repressive regimes has drawn increasing attention in the wake of the pro-democracy uprisings in the Arab world that laid bare the high-tech methods used by domestic spying agencies to stifle dissent.

Privacy International argues that the export of FinFisher software may be illegal under U.K. law and has demanded that British officials investigate.

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs authority has so far refused to say whether it has opened an inquiry into the matter. The agency said it could not comment on the lawsuit for legal reasons.

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