

Apple's \$120 mn patent award from Samsung upheld by top US court (Update)

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The US Supreme Court on Monday upheld a \$120 million patent award Samsung was ordered to pay Apple in the latest ruling in a series of legal skirmishes between the top two smartphone makers.

The US justices let stand without comment a 2016 appeals court verdict reinstating the award for Apple, which sued Samsung over patents for "slide to unlock" and other features used on smartphones.

The case is separate from a bigger patent court battle in which Samsung was initially ordered to pay \$1 billion to the iPhone maker. That case is set for a new trial over some elements of the damages awarded.

Monday's ruling involved some smartphone features Apple alleged were

copied by the South Korean electronics giant. Samsung had claimed these features were "obvious" and thus not able to be patented.

Apple had sought some \$2.2 billion at trial, only to have a jury award the California-based company \$119.6 million. An appeals panel overturned that verdict, but the full appellate panel reinstated the award in October 2016 by a vote of 8-3.

Samsung said in a statement its argument was supported "by many who believed that the court should hear the case to reinstate fair standards that promote innovation and prevent abuse of the patent system."

The company noted that one of Apple's patents at issue in this case has been invalidated by courts "and yet today's decision allows Apple to unjustly profit from this patent, stunts innovation and places competition in the courtroom rather than the marketplace."

Apple did not immediately respond to an AFP query on the decision.

Samsung and Apple agreed in 2014 to drop all patent disputes outside the United States, marking a partial ceasefire in a seemingly relentless legal war between the world's two tech giants.

The companies have battled in close to a dozen countries, with each accusing the other of infringing on various patents related to their flagship smartphone and tablet products.

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