Spanish War Crimes Probe Against Israeli Officials to Go On

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A Spanish court announced a decision on Friday to go ahead with a much publicized investigation against senior Israeli officials over alleged war crimes.

Last month, Spanish judge Fernando Andreu launched the investigation against seven current or former Israeli officials, over a 2002 bombing in Gaza that killed top Hamas militant Salah Shehadeh and 14 other people, including nine children.

The investigation includes former defense minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, and former Israel Defense Forces chief of staff Dan Halutz, who served as the commander of the Israel Air Force at the time of the targeted assassination of Shehadeh, along with five other Israeli officials.

The judge initially launched the investigation under a doctrine that allows prosecution in Spain, and other European countries, to reach far beyond national borders in cases of torture or war crimes. The universal jurisdiction ruling sparked outrage in Israel and elsewhere.

Subsequently, Spanish Foreign Minister said that Spain would act to amend the legislation that granted Andreu the authority to launch the investigation, promising Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni that he would take action to prevent such moves in the future.

According to Spanish judicial sources, Andreu decided to continue with investigation after reading material handed over to Spain by Israel's Foreign Ministry, indicating that Israel is not investigating the incident.