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Canada to sell military drone parts to Turkey despite arms embargo

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Canada has approved the sale of sophisticated military drone optics to Turkey despite an arms embargo against Ankara for from its military operation into northern Syria in October, the International Business Times (IBT) reported on Friday.

Turkey's primary drone suppliers, Bayraktar Tactical UAS and TAI Anka, use Canadian-manufactured electro-optical and infrared cameras in their armed and unarmed drones, said the U.S. online publication.

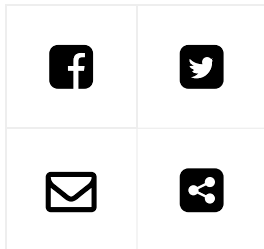
Canada extended its arms embargo on Turkey, the third largest buyer of Canadian military goods, in April 2020 "until further notice", without providing an explanation.

"They [Canadian government] didn't explain why they took this step," IBT quoted a Turkish official as saying. "It might be about domestic politics as the Armenian and Greek lobbies in the country [Canada] have some political power."

Turkish officials were reportedly concerned about the arms ban since Ankara regularly deploys drones in its operations in Syria and Libya.

Canada agreed to exempt military-level cameras from the ban after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan spoke on the phone with Canadian counterpart Justin Trudeau.

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The Canadian Foreign Ministry said Canada could issue export permits for military items depending on circumstances.

"In April 2020, Canada significantly narrowed the scope of its policy regarding the export of controlled items to Turkey," IBT quoted a ministry spokesperson as saying.

"While restrictions will continue to apply to military exports to Turkey, Canada will consider on a case-by-case basis whether there are exceptional circumstances, including but not limited to NATO cooperation programs that might justify issuing an export permit for military items," the spokesperson said.



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