

Qatar hits out at Airbus as new jet grounded in paint dispute

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People watch as an Airbus A350 aircraft flies past at the Singapore Airshow on February 16, 2022.

Qatar Airways on Monday accused aviation giant Airbus of blocking efforts to settle their billion-dollar dispute over the safety of the A350 as

it announced that another plane has been grounded with peeling paintwork.

The airline, which has now grounded 22 of its 53 A350 jets since November 2020, said it was determined to plough ahead with [legal action](#) seeking \$610 million in compensation plus damages for each day the conflict goes on.

While they fight in the London courts, Airbus has in turn sought to cancel orders made by Qatar Airways for two other A350 jets and 50 A321neo planes.

The airline said it was surprised that Airbus chief executive Guillaume Faury, announcing record profits, had said earlier in February that while protecting itself in court "we continue to try to resolve the situation in a more amicable way".

"It is important to clarify that neither Qatar Airways nor its legal team are aware of any efforts by Airbus to try to resolve the situation in an amicable way; in fact, the actual situation is to the contrary," the airline responded in a statement.

It highlighted what it called Airbus "efforts to attempt to terminate their own contractual commitment to establish a full root cause analysis of the A350 Accelerated Surface Degradation which is currently impacting the A350 aircraft type".

The airline vowed to continue its legal battle to make Airbus "fully, properly and transparently investigate" the paint problems on the jets that it says could be a threat to the plane's lightning protection.

Airbus insists it has accounted for the problems and there is no safety concern.

Ahead of the next hearing on the dispute in April, Qatar Airways has secured an injunction preventing Airbus from cancelling deals for other jets.

"There would be serious consequences for Airbus should this order be breached," said the Qatar Airways statement.

The problems first arose in November 2020 when a jet was taken to Shannon airport in Ireland to be painted in special colours for the World Cup to be held in Qatar this year.

Qatar Airways has suffered huge losses during the coronavirus pandemic while after two years of losses, Airbus announced profits of 4.2 billion euros (\$4.8 billion) for 2021 and said it expects to deliver 720 commercial aircraft this year.

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