Report: DOJ pursuing criminal charges against Huawei for theft of tech



Enlarge / A Seattle jury found Huawei liable in a civil lawsuit brought by T-Mobile for theft of robotic tech. Now the DOJ is ready to file criminal charges.

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In the wake of a civil lawsuit by T-Mobile and other telecommunications companies against the Chinese networking and telecommunications company Huawei, the US Department of Justice is reportedly conducting a criminal investigation of the company. According to a *Wall Street Journal* report, the

DOJ is close to filing an indictment against Huawei for theft of trade secrets, including the technology used in a robot developed by T-Mobile to test smartphones.

The report comes a week after an employee of Huawei was arrested in Poland on espionage charges. And Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou was arrested in Canada in December based on US charges that she was responsible for violations of US sanctions against Iran. In November, the US government began ratcheting up pressure on allies to ban Huawei network hardware from their telecommunications systems over espionage concerns.

Huawei has long been suspected of benefitting from Chinese economic espionage and the forced transfer of technologies from foreign companies doing business in China. Over a decade ago, Cisco sued Huawei for stealing routing-software source code and incorporating it into Huawei network products. In 2012, Huawei executives claimed the infringing code had come from a third party and was freely available on the Internet, a claim Cisco executive vice president Mark Chandler vigorously denied.

In the recent civil case, which was originally filed in 2014, a jury in Seattle found that Huawei had stolen robotic technology from a T-Mobile lab. Huawei had used the access it gained by being a handset supplier to obtain copies of the robot’s specifications and steal software, parts, and trade secrets from the lab. According to T-Mobile’s original filing in the suit, “Huawei initially tried to cover up its actions but ultimately admitted that its employees misappropriated parts and information about T-Mobile’s robot in coordination with Huawei R&D so that Huawei could build and improve its own testing robot.”

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