

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **UK: CIA rendition flights used UK airfields**

Amnesty International today published the details of CIA flights that used UK airfields to refuel just hours after transferring detainees to countries where they risked torture.

The information concerns two flights in late 2001 and one in early 2002, where planes that had taken detainees to Jordan and Egypt, landed immediately afterwards at Prestwick airport in Glasgow for refuelling before heading back to the United States.

On Monday 12th December UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw stated that since US President George W Bush took office in January 2001, the UK government has found no evidence of a request from the United States "for overflights or for refuelling or other facilitation for what you've described as rendition....nor are we aware by other means of any such case."

"The UK government cannot distance itself so easily from a policy based on kidnap and unlawful transfer. In 2002 UK agents were implicated in the rendition of two UK residents from Gambia to Afghanistan to Guantánamo Bay. Whether the US is sending people to other countries to be tortured, or snatching them in other countries to be abused in Guantanamo, international law prohibits the UK, or any other state, from aiding or abetting them," said Claudio Cordone, Amnesty International's Senior Director of Regional Programmes.

Amnesty International's information concerns a Gulfstream V turbojet, then registered as N379P, which between 2001 and 2005 made at least 78 stopovers at UK airports while en route to or from destinations such as Baku, Dubai, Cyprus, Karachi, Qatar, Riyadh, Tashkent, and Warsaw.

Records show that three of these flights were directly connected to known cases of rendition:

On 23 October 2001, witnesses saw Jamil Qasim Saeed Mohammed being bundled on board a Gulfstream V, registration N379P, by a group of masked men at Karachi airport in Pakistan. The plane flew Jamil Qasim Saeed Mohammed to Jordan. The following day, the Gulfstream flew to Glasgow Prestwick to refuel, then back to Dulles International near Washington DC. Amnesty International has repeatedly requested information from the US authorities about the current whereabouts and legal status of Jamil Qasim Saeed Mohammed, but has received no reply.

On 18/19 December 2001, according to an inquiry conducted by the Swedish Parliamentary Ombudsmen, the Gulfstream V took Ahmed Agiza and Mohammed al-Zari from Sweden to Cairo. Amnesty International's records show that the plane had made several trips between Cairo and

Prestwick earlier in the month, and stopped to refuel at Prestwick after leaving the two detainees in Cairo, where they were reportedly tortured. In March 2005, the Chief Parliamentary Ombudsman in Sweden, having reviewed the Swedish government's role in the transfer to Egypt of the two detainees, concluded that the "the Swedish Security Police lost control of the situation at the airport and during the transport to Egypt. The American security personnel took charge... Such total surrender of power to exercise public authority on Swedish territory is clearly contrary to Swedish law."

On 12 January 2002, according to Indonesian security officials, the Gulfstream V, N379P, took Muhammad Saad Iqbal Madni from Jakarta to Cairo. Amnesty International records confirm previous media reports that when the plane left Cairo, it flew to Prestwick to refuel. Iqbal Madni has since been returned to US custody, and is currently being held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He does not have a lawyer, and other detainees have said in the last month that he is in poor condition and "at risk of losing his mind".

"The UK has allowed these aircraft to land, refuel and take off from their territory. Instead of ducking its responsibilities, the UK Government must launch an immediate, thorough and independent investigation into mounting evidence that its territory has been used to assist in unlawfully transporting detainees to countries where they may face "disappearance", torture or other ill-treatment," said Claudio Cordone.

Pending the results of such an investigation, the UK should ensure that its territory and facilities are not used to assist rendition flights. Amnesty International also urges the UK to provide full cooperation with the investigations to be carried out by the European Parliament and by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on allegations about secret detention centres, and to provide complete information on their internal law and practices relating to secret rendition flights, as requested by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

**Amnesty International is campaigning to stop torture and other ill-treatment in the "war on terror". For more information, please go to the campaign home page: <http://web.amnesty.org/pages/stoptorture-index-eng>**

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