

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WEB FEATURE

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Rendition -- CIA impunity again goes unchallenged

The authorities in Germany have decided not to seek the extradition of 13 US citizens, including at least 10 operatives of the CIA, suspected of being involved in the abduction and rendition of a German citizen Khaled el-Masri.

Khaled el-Masri, a 44-year-old German of Lebanese origin, was arrested and unlawfully detained while on a trip to Macedonia in December 2003. He was handed over to US agents and secretly flown to Afghanistan as part of the US programme of secret detentions and renditions -- the illegal transfer of people between states outside of any judicial process.

A case of mistaken identity

After five months of alleged ill-treatment, Khaled el-Masri was flown to an airport in Albania and released after the US authorities apparently realized they had the wrong man. On 25 June 2007, public prosecutors in Munich asked for the extradition of 13 US citizens, of whom at least 10 are thought to be CIA operatives.

However, the German Ministry of Justice, following informal discussions with US officials, has decided not to forward the extradition requests to the US authorities. German courts will be unable to hold accountable individuals against whom there is evidence of involvement in Khaled el-Masri's abduction, unlawful detention and alleged torture and ill-treatment.

Threatening to facilitate impunity

The failure of the German government to seek this extradition threatens to facilitate impunity for alleged perpetrators of human rights violations, including torture, in the context of the "war on terror". Amnesty International has repeatedly called on all European governments to collaborate with judicial investigations into renditions that have taken place in Europe.

Amnesty International **urges the German government to reverse its decision and forward these extradition requests**, as an important step to bringing those responsible for human rights violations to justice. Governments should collaborate in ending human rights violations, not in perpetrating them or in facilitating impunity.