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# Amnesty report claims CIA used private flights to hide terror rendition

## RAW STORY

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Amnesty International has released a [report](#) claiming that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) used private aircraft operators and front companies to hide CIA rendition flights and "black site" detention facilities in foreign countries.

The report includes a lengthy account drawn upon the only public testimony of detainees held at "black sites," that of three Yemeni nationals who "disappeared" in U.S. custody for more than eighteen months but were never charged with any terrorism-related offences.

"During their 'disappearance,' the three men were kept in at least four different secret facilities, likely to have been in at least three different countries, judging by the length of their transfer flights and other information they have been able to provide," the report states. "Although not conclusive, the evidence suggests that they were held at various times in Djibouti, Afghanistan and Eastern Europe."

While imprisoned in Afghanistan, the men were kept in "complete isolation, in cells measuring about 2m x 3m," and "permanently shackled to a ring fixed in the floor."

Some time in April of 2004, the men were

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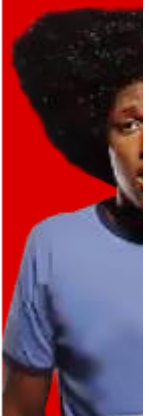
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transferred to a facility that is believed to be somewhere in Europe, specifically Eastern Europe. According to one of the men, at this "new or refurbished" facility "all of the guards and officials were Americans."

At this last destination, "the men were never allowed outside, or even to look through a window," and the "temperatures were colder than any they had ever known."

Finally, they were returned to Yemen where "after more than nine months in arbitrary detention" the men pleaded guilty to forging travel documents, even though no evidence was presented in court, then sentenced to two year prison sentences. Since the men had spent up to 18 months in secret U.S. custody and 9 months in Yemen, they were ordered released by the judge.

"Under suspicion by any potential employers, and harassed by the security and intelligence service, they fear they will never be able to lead normal lives or take care of their families," the report states. "All three men have suffered emotional and physical trauma – Salah Qaru and Muhammad Bashmilah have described severe torture during their detention in Jordan and are in urgent need of medical attention for problems caused or exacerbated by the long months in isolation and secret detention."

The report also details dozens of destinations around the world where planes associated with rendition flights landed and took off. In addition, the report lists the private airlines with permission to land at U.S. military bases worldwide.

[Below the Radar: Secret flights to Torture and 'Disappearance'](#), reveals how the CIA exploited aviation practices to hide behind the identity of private plane operators and circumvent authorities.

According to the Chicago Convention, states do not have the authority to question the reasons for the private, non-commercial flights flying over a

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country, or making technical stops there without prior authorization.

Amnesty claims that the United States may have transferred hundreds of individuals for the purposes of interrogation by nations with "dubious human rights records." They further claim that "rendition is part of an elaborate clandestine detention regime that includes the use of 'black sites' and 'disappearances,' as well as torture and inhuman treatment."

They report fingers companies suspected of or able to have taken part in the program.

The full report (which is a very large file) has been made available [here](#).

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