

Documents show CIA prisoners held in Poland?

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"There is still no evidence that these people were terrorist suspects, imprisoned by the CIA," Civic Platform MP Konstanty Miodowicz, who heads the Parliamentary Special Services Committee, told Rzeczpospolita.

Evidence given to the Helsinki Foundation by border guards in Poland reveal, for the first time, official documentation of people, presumed to be terrorist suspects, disembarking from planes in Poland leased by the CIA.

The revelations add to previous reports alleging that a secret CIA prison existed in northern Poland where al-Qaida suspects were held. The documents reportedly show that from December 2002 to July 2003, 20 people were held for various lengths of time in a facility near the Szymany airfield in the northeast of Poland.

On 5 December 2002, a Gulfstream N63MU brought the first eight terrorist suspects from Dubai to Szymany. Next followed secret flights from Morocco and Afghanistan. The last CIA plane - a Boeing 737 - landed in Szymany on 22 September to collect five people who were flown to Cyprus, show flight logs. The final flight recorded by the documents seen by the Rzeczpospolita newspaper - a Boeing 737, flight number N313P - landed in Poland on 22 September 2003.

The documents do not reveal names or nationality of the passengers of the CIA planes, however, and one MP says that there is nothing contained in the documents to suggest that the people on the aircrafts - describe in one document as being "businessmen" - were al-Qaeda suspects.

"There is still no evidence that these people were terrorist suspects, imprisoned by the CIA," Civic Platform MP Konstanty Miodowicz, who heads the Parliamentary Special Services Committee, told Rzeczpospolita.

In February, air traffic control in Warsaw confirmed that at least six CIA planes landed in Poland in 2003, the first time Polish authorities acknowledged the existence of the planes after years of stonewalling on the issue.

"It is time for the authorities to provide a full accounting of Poland's role in rendition," Adam Bodnar, of the Warsaw-based Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights said.

Mounting evidence

Despite denials of any CIA prison by president of Poland at the time, Aleksander Kwasniewski and other officials, evidence of their existence has been mounting this year.

In January, Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, suspected of the 2000 al-Qaida bombing of the USS Cole, was interrogated and had his basic human rights violated in a secret CIA prison in northern Poland, claimed a UN report.

The 226-page report on CIA detention centres in Europe was presented to the UN Human Rights Council in March.

It alleged that the US kept the prisons throughout the world secret – such as the one thought to have been housed in northern Poland between 2003 and 2005 – so as to be able to obtain information from suspects using unlawful methods, such as torture.

The report said: “Secret detention as such may constitute torture or ill-treatment for the direct victims as well as their families,” the investigators said, adding that the victims and their families deserve compensation and those responsible should be prosecuted.”

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