

Planes known to carry CIA terror suspects landed in Tel Aviv

Known American-Israeli interrogation facility on Israeli soil

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The Israel Airports Authority has confirmed that planes known to have been used by the CIA to transport suspects to detention and interrogation facilities stopped at Ben-Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv.

According to the British civil liberties organization Statewatch, at least four flights through Tel Aviv occurred between 2003 and 2004.

The data compiled by the organization draws on, among other sources, information from a European parliament committee as well as various European states.

On May 7, 2003, an American GulfStream jet took off from Beirut in Lebanon to Larnaka in Cyprus. From there, it flew to "Tel Aviv" (meaning Ben-Gurion Airport on the outskirts of the city). Two days later, the plane returned to Larnaka, from where it departed for Morocco.

A week later, on May 13, records show a Hercules jet with registration number N8213G and owned by a company called Prescott Support flew from Athens to Tel Aviv. According to the American media, Prescott Support is a straw company for the CIA.

On the same day, the same plane departed Tel Aviv for Yerevan, the Armenian capital (a spokeswoman for the Israel Airports Authority confirmed the four flights as reported by Statewatch, but stressed that this flight went to Avignon in France, and not to Yerevan).

A year later, on May 8, 2004, a GulfStream plane took off from Larnaka and flew to Tel Aviv, before returning to Larnaka a short time afterward. Two days later, the plane returned to Tel Aviv from Larnaka, and then flew back to Cyprus before heading to Amman.

The Airports Authority spokeswoman said that she could confirm just two of the four flights.

Records also show dozens of flights flew to and from the airport in the Jordanian capital, Amman.

The international media and European aviation authorities have uncovered details about these flights, including the identity numbers of the planes, their make and model, the companies from which they were leased and their destinations.

The planes are chartered by the CIA from American concerns, mostly front companies.

There is no known American-Israeli interrogation facility on Israeli soil, although it is known that the Israeli and American intelligence organizations share information about the arrests and interrogation of Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad terror suspects.

But a coincidental meeting at the Kishon prison, near Haifa, between a Jordanian-Pakistani detainee and an Israeli lawyer has shed new light on the intelligence cooperation between Israel and Jordan and these countries' special relationship with the Central Intelligence Agency and America's war on global terrorism.

The Shin Bet security service has confirmed it is holding Marwan Ibrahim Ali Jabur at the Shin Bet security service wing of the Kishon jail, on suspicion of terror activity and has stated his custody is subject to court approval.

This could also turn out to be the first case of the United States handing Israel a world jihad suspect who is not linked to Palestinian terror or Hezbollah. Hundreds of similar cases - of suspects being transferred between countries - have been publicized over the last few years. However, this is the first time such a case has come to light in Israel.

All information comes from the statement Jabur signed and the conversations he conducted with attorney Nizar Mahajna and another lawyer, Maher Talhami, who is also dealing with the case.

Mahajna, from Umm al-Fahm, says that he first became aware of Jabur's presence at Kishon when he met with detainees at the jail last year.

"A few detainees were brought into the hall," said Mahajna. "And one of them told me, 'I'm not of them'" - meaning he was not a Palestinian from the West Bank or Gaza - "and asked, 'Do you have time for me?' I told him yes. He seemed very frightened."

That day, September 22, Mahajna spent several minutes listening to Jabur's surprising story, and then had him sign a statement whose details are being publicized here for the first time.

Jabur was born on October 15, 1976, in Amman, Jordan, to Palestinian refugees from the Gaza town of Khan Yunis. When he was 2 years old, his family moved to Saudi Arabia. When Jabur was 19, he went to Pakistan to study mechanical engineering. There he met and married a Pakistani woman and they had three children.

He became a Pakistani citizen - he holds both a Pakistani passport and a Palestinian ID. He completed his engineering internship in France, after which he returned to Pakistan and visited Afghanistan several times. This travel pattern, which characterizes quite a few Al-Qaida and international terror operatives who have been arrested since the September 11, 2001 attacks, aroused the suspicion of the Pakistani security services.

Jabur provided several versions of the circumstances of his arrest. The first appears in the statement he signed, in which he states he was arrested on May 9, 2004: "I was arrested by Pakistani forces because I was a foreigner and an Arab in Pakistan, under the excuse that I belonged to terrorist Islamist groups, which is not true."

The close cooperation between Israel and Jordan regarding the war on terror is also nothing new. The two countries cooperated even before signing a peace treaty in 1994, and Jordan's King Hussein and his top officials, including the secret service heads, would secretly meet

with Israeli leaders and intelligence officials. Once the peace treaty was signed, the cooperation increased.

A shot, a pill, a flight Jabur's statement sheds more light on the matter. This is what he had to say about Jordan and Israel: "I was taken to Jordan by the American forces, on a plane, not before we got an injection and a pill. The Jordanian forces received us and began an interrogation, which lasted a month and a half. Afterward they took me to the border and handed me over to Israeli intelligence."

Jabur said he was taken by car from the detention facility in Jordan and that the Jordanians then told him to get on a bus to Israel. He said he refused and told them: "If you want to hand me over to the Jews, you'll have to do it yourself."

The Jordanians put him in a car carrying Israeli security officials. "I saw sunlight for the first time when they brought me to Israel," said Jabur. "It was also the first time I saw the Red Cross in two and a half years."

In his statement, Jabur makes no complaints of torture against the Shin Bet, in contrast to what he said he underwent at the hands of Pakistani and American interrogators.

Mahajna and Talhami became familiar with the incident because the former represents the Palestinian Authority "prisoners club," and the two lawyers took down Jabur's statement on behalf of the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel.

According to the Shin Bet, Jabur was first detained in Israel on September 18, and his remand has been extended several times since then. The last extension was granted on October 23 for eight days.

The military tribunal at Kishon prison is due Tuesday to discuss whether to extend Jabur's remand again, indict him or return him to Jordan. Jabur is concerned about something else: that he will be transferred, like merchandise, to the Palestinian Authority security services.

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