

'Torture flight' plane spotted in Birmingham

By [Robert Booth](#)

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An American plane named in an inquiry by the European parliament into alleged CIA [torture](#) flights landed at Birmingham airport last month and was met by British special forces helicopters.

Plane spotters said the Gulfstream jet touched down from an undisclosed location on 2 October and was met by two army air corps Dauphin 2 helicopters used by the SAS at Hereford.

The 22-seat plane is registered to L-3 Integrated Systems, a Montana-based subsidiary of a US defence corporation. It made numerous flights between Ireland and Egypt in 2003 and was involved in an accident at Bucharest airport in Romania in 2004 after a flight from Bagram airbase in Afghanistan.

The European parliament reported that seven passengers disappeared after the accident and deplored the CIA's use of Romania as a stopover for extraordinary renditions of terror suspects including the British national Binyam Mohammed.

The report's authors said they regretted "the lack of control of the Gulfstream aircraft with registration number N478GS".

A Ministry of Defence source said that the meeting at Birmingham airport had nothing to do with the rendition of prisoners, whatever the allegations about the plane's past use. "This was routine military liaison between two allies," he said.

The plane departed the next day at the same time as a Boeing 757 operated by Comco, a private company that provides flights for the US defence department, which had arrived a day earlier.

The Gulfstream has also been photographed at Glasgow Prestwick airport, Shannon airport in Ireland and Stuttgart airport in Germany.

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