

Update: Sweden: Expulsions carried out by US agents, men tortured in Egypt

- **second Swedish TV4 transcript with more details on the US abduction**
- **Shannon airport on west of Ireland used as stop-over for US plane (from Village magazine)**

In May *Statewatch* carried a story based on a Swedish television documentary by TV4 - "The broken promise", broadcast on 17 May 2004 showed that the expulsion of two Egyptian men to Egypt on 18 December 2001 carried out by hooded US agents. The plane booked by the Swedish Security Police (SÄPO) was cancelled when another plane - N379P - a "Gulfstream" executive jet supplied by a firm on the east coast of the USA which works exclusively for the the US Defence Department. The Swedish Migration Board had decided that both needed protection and granted them asylum. The TV programme gave evidence of how the two men were tortured in Egypt. See: [Expulsions carried out by US agents](#) and full-transcript of "The broken promise", TV4, Monday 17 May 2004: [Transcript](#) (pdf).

A second documentary by TV4, "Broken promise - Part Two", was broadcast on 24 May 2004: [Transcript of Part Two](#) (pdf). The programme includes interviews with Swedish police on duty on 18 December 2001 who describe two US civilians from the embassy and eight other hooded US agents. The two handcuffed-Egyptian men had all their clothes cut off them until they were naked - they were then sedated, dressed in overalls, blindfolded and hooded. They were then flown in the US "Gulfstream" plane to Egypt.

The TV4 programme makers were helped by information from Ireland where the "Gulfstream" plane was noted by dedicated Irish plane spotters at Shannon Airport on 18 January 2003 (where it was no doubt on the way to another "mission"). This is described in the article below from "Village" magazine.

Shannon used as kidnap operation stop-over

by Michael McCaughan, Village magazine, Ireland (2-8 October 2004)

Dedicated Irish plane spotters picked out the small, Gulfstream jet on the runway at Shannon airport on 18 January, 2003. "It really didn't stand out," recalled Tim Hourigan, a peace activist who has closely monitored US military flights through Shannon. "It's the sort of plane used by corporate executives the world over."

The plane's touchdown was duly logged and cast into cyberspace where it helped Swedish TV4 documentary investigators tracking the kidnap and torture of two Egyptian terror suspects. The plane in question is leased exclusively to the United States government and

its cargo is a cast of detainees held beyond the reach of international law.

The flight path regularly originates in North Carolina, the jet proceeds to Dallas airport where it picks up agents and continues its journey to Europe. A stop-off is made in one or more allied countries, notably Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Israel, Jordan, Egypt and Afghanistan, according to the Swedish investigation.

The small jet is the US executive link to a state-sponsored kidnap and torture project called "Extraordinary Rendition" approved at the highest level of the Bush administration.

The programme was first mooted inside the offices of US intelligence where the US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had grown increasingly angry and frustrated over the lack of results from interrogations in Guantanamo and other holding facilities. The goal of the operation is to seize terror suspects, hold them without time restraints and gather as much information as possible by any means necessary.

Rumsfeld had previously dismissed international concern over harsh treatment of US detainees as "isolated pockets of international hyperventilation" as the US justice department expanded the definition of torture.

And Jay S Bybee, head of the justice department's office of legal counsel, has said: "We conclude that for an act to constitute torture, it must inflict pain that is difficult to endure." Bybee then added that such pain should be equivalent in intensity "to the pain accompanying serious physical injury, such as organ failure, impairment of bodily function, or even death".

The Israeli government redefined torture as "moderate physical pressure" but now the Bush administration stretched the concept to include pain until death and Bybee was rewarded by Bush with a nomination to become a federal judge. President Bush himself then confirmed the government's derogation from international standards of justice in February 2002, announcing a green light for the use of extreme measures: "I determine that none of the provisions of Geneva apply to our conflict with al-Qaeda in Afghanistan or elsewhere throughout the world."

The case of the two Egyptians tracked by Swedish investigators reveals the modus operandi of the Extraordinary Rendition project which has come to rely on Shannon airport as a safe haven in its global flight path. On 18 December, 2001 US operatives kidnapped Ahmed Agiza and Muhammed Al-Zery, Egyptian exiles who had requested asylum in Sweden. Agiza and Al-Azery, suspected Islamic militants, were forced onto a plane in Sweden despite protests by the Swedish migration board.

Under international law asylum seekers cannot be expelled to a country where they face

the likelihood of torture or inhumane treatment.

A Swedish television report, "The Broken Promise" revealed that the Swedish government co-operated with the US government after assurances were given that the suspects would not be mistreated.

"Foreign masked agents have been allowed to strip, degrade and arrest suspects in Sweden," revealed the documentary. "The two prisoners had their clothes removed from their bodies with a scissors, a suppository inserted into their anus, and diapers placed on them. Their hands and feet were chained to a specially designed harness and they travelled blindfolded and hooded".

Once in detention in Egypt local interrogators fastened electrodes to the prisoner's genitals, breast nipples, tongue, ear lobes and underarms. There were doctors present to judge how much torture the prisoners could withstand. The exposed parts were anointed, so that there wouldn't be marks and scars and cold water was poured to stop blood clots. One of the suspects was sentenced to 25 years jail in Egypt while the second was released without charge.

In a recent Guardian feature the American investigative journalist Seymour Hersh uncovered the roots of this secret US terror network launched in late 2001 after president Bush signed a top-secret finding "authorising the defence department to set up a specially recruited clandestine team of special forces operatives who would defy diplomatic niceties and international law and snatch - or assassinate, if necessary - identified "high value" al-Qaeda operatives anywhere in the world".

The project belonged to what is called a "special-access programme" co-ordinated secretly within the US defence department. Extraordinary Rendition bears more than a passing resemblance to operation Condor, the "multinational of terror" organised by six US-backed Latin American dictatorships in the 1970s.

Named after the legendary Latin American vulture this state terror programme soared above national borders as regimes swapped suspects and facilitated death squads and kidnap teams. Suspects were disappeared without a trace, held without due process and monitored by physicians during torture sessions.

In one Condor case an exiled Uruguayan senator Zelmar Michelini was kidnapped from his hotel room in central Buenos Aires, his bullet-ridden body found several days later. Soon after that another high profile political exile, the progressive former Bolivian president Juan Jose Torres, was kidnapped and killed in Argentina.

The Condor team grew so confident of its outreach capacity that Uruguayan agents

planned to assassinate the former New York mayor Ed Koch after he publicly denounced the Uruguayan regime. Twenty five years later the Argentinian government formally acknowledged its role in the Condor team and paid compensation to the Torres family.

The return of constitutional rule to South American nations has permitted substantial investigation into the Condor state terror programme and the Spanish judge Balthasar Garzon has attempted to extradite alleged operatives to face justice in Spain.

The dictators of that era, notably Gen Augusto Pinochet and Gen Jorge Videla, are widely despised and cannot walk the streets of the cities where once they controlled the fate of all citizens. "This is a war of good against evil," boasted the Argentinian junta leader Videla. "This is a war for western, Christian civilisation."

The Bush administration, flouting international law, has arguably laid the groundwork for a similar state terror network. Fredrik Laurin, a Swedish journalist who worked on the "Broken Promise", a documentary following the fate of the two Egyptians, tracked the movements of the private jet which took the suspects from Sweden to Egypt, discovering that Shannon was among the stopover points.

Dozens of terror suspects have been detained in similar circumstances and taken to countries where torture is a routine instrument of police interrogation. Muhammad Saad Iqbal was seized in November 2001, taken in chains on board a civilian aircraft in Jakarta and delivered to Egyptian security forces. His fate is since unknown.

The horrific kidnapping of foreigners in Iraq, the agonising wait and the videotaped beheadings have received global media coverage and inspired widespread revulsion.

However the deafening media silence on the issue of an expanding US international terror network is a rerun of the cheerleading coverage which accompanied the invasion of Iraq.

1. Village is a new weekly news magazine: <http://www.villagemagazine.ie>
2. See: **Statewatch: Sweden - expulsions carried out by US agents**
3. Full-transcript of "The broken promise - Part I", TV4, Monday 17 May 2004: **Transcript** (pdf)
4. Second documentary by TV4, "Broken promise - Part Two", was broadcast on 24 May 2004: **Transcript of Part Two** (pdf)
5. See also: **Canada: Public inquiry into Maher Arar case - how about al-Rawi and al-Banna?**

of Statewatch bulletin

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Part one - The key witness

At 16.48 on December 18th 2001, Ahmed Agiza is picked up by the police on his way home from a course in Swedish in the city of Karlstad, western Sweden. A few minutes later Säpo, the Swedish security police, arrest Muhammad Al Zery in a shop in Stockholm. They are taken into waiting cars and driven towards Bromma airport in Stockholm. So far, this is a seemingly all-Swedish police action.

But the picture soon changes.

Our program Kalla fakta's (Cold facts) reporters have spoken with many sources who were present at Bromma airport on the night of 18th December. All want to be anonymous - all except one who now dares to come forward and tell what he saw.

"The key witness"

VO:

-Well, it all started with the colleagues from SÄK (Säpo, the Security police) calling and ask if we can help ... with our localities etcetera, because two arrested men, suspected of terrorism, are on their way in. And of course we oblige and help our colleagues.

Speak.:

-Paul Forell, a policeman with 25 years professional experience, is a key witness to the incident. He is stationed at Bromma airport, and was on duty this very night.

Paul Forell, Police inspector:

- Well, after a while came the Security police , my colleagues, by our entrance door here, and after another five, ten minutes came two American colleagues, in civilian suits, and we stood there for a while, talking.

Speak.:

The Americans in plain clothes suits are about 35 years, by rough estimate. They come through the entrance, that faces the parking space. They introduce themselves with Christian names, and Paul Forell's memory picture is that they are from the American embassy. Together, the men wait for the expected transport - it takes about 20 minutes.

Speak.:

The Security police's cars drive up to gate K at Bromma. They are let in and conducted to the Police station by the airport's security officer.

Paul Forell, Police inspector:

-Well, they were parked just outside here. Just outside, and that's a question of just a couple of metres away. That's where they put their vehicles, just behind our police car. Well, then came this party in here, with the arrested men, into the station, and everything went very fast .

-The arrested men were dressed in their own clothes , if I don't remember all wrong. Of course they were... they had handcuffs and footcuffs on.

(Question) Who took the arrested men in?

-Americans... The Americans. The Swedish policemen stayed behind in the outer, public premises. They were three-four men to each of the arrested, and as far as I know they were normally dressed, that is jeans, and ... shirt, and then they had hoods on. The Americans had hoods on when they came. I showed them in, briefly. And as I have understood, the arrested men had their clothes changed in the interior of our localities.

Speak.:

So, in the little police station are now an interpreter and about eight American agents in the changing-rooms in the interior, plus another two, the ones in suits, in the office room. There are also a number of policemen from Säpo, and another few from the ordinary police, and an interpreter. Plus Paul Forell, the only one in uniform.

Paul Forell, police inspector:

Well, my first thought here.... what is this? That was my first thought, I think, and the next was , I suppose, that these must be very dangerous men they have arrested, so I kept myself a

bit in the background. There was hardly room for me in my own station.

Speak.:

Paul Forell stands in the office room , and from there he can't see or hear what happens in the changing-room, but other sources Kalla fakta's reporters have been in contact with tell:

The arrested men are placed here, in the police station's changing-room. Foot- and handcuffs are still in place when their clothes are cut apart. When the men are naked, suppositories of an unknown kind are inserted into their anuses - one witness concludes that it is a sedatory. The men have diapers put on them, and then dark overalls, blindfold and a hood over the head.

Paul Forell, police inspector :

(Question) -Who were with the arrested men in the changing-rooms?

-Well, as I understood it, they were Americans, those with hoods on.

(Question) -Who were in command?

-As far as I can remember, it was someone among the guys who wore masks. They were very professional in their way of acting, and if you'd compare with anything it would be the National action force (Swedish elite police unit for special actions). They acted very deftly, swiftly and silently.

(Question) -They had done this before?

-Yes, absolutely, absolutely.

(Question) -What do the arrested men look like when they are taken out?

-When they left the changing-room, they had their clothes changed into overalls, and were still with handcuffs and footcuffs. They were taken out to the cars, and then away.

Speak.:

The plane is some hundred metres away. It is a small jet - a Gulfstream 5, with register markings N379P - and, as Kalla fakta could reveal last week, it is flying for the US Department of Defense. One of the prisoners is placed lying on the floor with hands and feet cuffed together behind his back. The other is strapped fast in the cabin, with his hands over his head.

The two arrested Egyptians, about eight American agents and two Swedish police from Säpo take off from Bromma at 21.49.

Paul Forell, police inspector:



-Well, after that my Swedish colleagues and the two Americans in suits are still here. As I recall it, they were around for another five to ten minutes at the most, and then they left the station by the entrance door.

Speak.:

At 03.00, the American plane lands in Cairo. The expulsion has been carried out. The two arrested men are taken to the Egyptian security service, where the interrogations start, the very same night. It will be five weeks before the Swedish embassy will come to visit them.

Dennis Töllborg

Ingen text.

Paul Forell, police inspector:

-There was one thing I kept thinking of a little, it is a little extraordinary that we had not been contacted about the plane, because all aircraft that come from non-Schengen countries are to contact the Police, and no one informed us that an American plane would land at Bromma.

(Question) -What conclusions do you draw from that?

-Well, that there was much too much hush...hush!

Part 2 Terrorist background

Hans Dahlgren, Swedish vice foreign minister (radio interview, morning of May 18th, 2004):

-These are not just any Egyptians. The reason for their expulsion was their leading positions in an infamous terrorist organization.

(interviewed in TV4, morning of May 18th , 2004):

-It wasn't just any Egyptians. These two persons had had leading positions in an infamous terrorist organization.

(interviewed in Kalla fakta, May 17th, 2004):

-They had held leading positions in a terrorist organization.

Speak.:

They were not just any Egyptians. They were terrorist leaders. That is the Swedish governments' message. The foundations for that came from the Swedish security police, Säpo, which in its turn had it from foreign intelligence services.

Arne Andersson, Säpo, responsible for the expulsion:

-All in all, there was no ground for us to believe anything else than that this was correct. We have such a mutual trust within and between security services, that if we get information we can as a rule trust it.

Speak.:

Kalla fakta can't decide whether the men are terrorists or not. But it would be possible to examine Säpo's basis for this assertion. But the details are secret, even to the accused themselves. Kalla fakta has, after several hour-long interviews with both the Swedish Foreign office and Säpo been informed about parts of the foundations. This shows, after a scrutiny, serious flaws.

Ahmed Agiza is accused by the Foreign office of being mixed up in, possibly convicted of, the murder of the Egyptian president Anwar Sadat in 1981. But that is wrong. He is not convicted - not even suspected in this connection. But, he is convicted by a military court in Cairo for membership in the outlawed organization Tala'e Alfath, with connections to the Egyptian islamic Jihad.

By telephone:

Diaa Rashwan, expert on islamistic movements, head of the research institute Al-Ahram:

I don't think that they are right. Ahmed Agiza left the Egyptian Jihad for ever in 1993 after a crisis, a big crisis, about the leadership and the behaviour of the leadership in Egyptian Jihad.



Speak.:

Diaa Rashwan is one of the Arab world's leading experts on radical islamistic groups, och and head of the respected research institute Al-Ahram (Ah-hram) in Cairo.

By telephone:

Diaa Rashwan, expert on islamistic movements, head of the research institute Al-Ahram:

-For me and many other specialists we have no trust in judging people in military courts. It means that they don't have the normal right to defend themselves. Countering the accusations, to be a leader of Tala'e Alfath, Ahmed Agiza was never a leader of Tala'e Alfath.

Speak.:

Agiza is said to have had contacts high up in Al Qaida, and it is quite right that he knows Ayman Al Zawahiri, today the second man in the movement, next to Usama Bin Laden. Agiza and Al Zawahiri were active in radical islamistic movements in Egypt during the 80's, and also met later under Agiza's exile in Pakistan in the middle of the 90's.

By telephone:

Diaa Rashwan, expert on islamistic movements , head of the research institute Al Ahram :

-Sure they met. But to meet someone doesn't mean that you agree with them or that you cooperate with them. As far as Ahmed Agiza is concerned, he might have had radical ideas all the time. But that doesn't mean that you are a terrorist.

Speak.:

Swedish Säpo doesn't have any information about later contacts between Agiza and Zawahiri. And Agiza has on several occasions dissociated himself from Zawahiri and his ideology of violence.



Speak.:

-Then what about the other man - Mohammed Al Zery? Säpo says that he is convicted of crime in Egypt. That is also wrong, he was suspected of crime, but is now acquitted by Egyptian authorities and set at liberty.

Kjell Jönsson, Mohammed Al Zery's Swedish lawyer:

-If he had had a leading position in a terrorist organization, it is absolutely unthinkable that the Egyptian state would set him at liberty and declare him innocent. So, this is a fundamental misjudgment from the government's side.

Hans Dahlgren, vice Foreign minister (interviewed in TV4 news programme, on May 18th, 2004):

-They were also suspected of preparing further terrorist actions, here on Swedish ground.

(interviewed on radio May 18th, 2004):

-The suspicion that was clearly put to the Swedish government was that they were, on Swedish territory, preparing further terrorist acts.

(from Kalla fakta, TV4, May 17th, 2004):

- They were suspected of preparing further terrorist attacks, here from Swedish territory.

Speak.:

So, the Foreign office now says that the men were planning terror acts abroad with Sweden as their base, which is a serious crime according to Swedish law.

But Säpo, who was investigating the two men for months, did not find any proof of criminal activities. Säpo didn't even do a house search in their homes to seize material evidence, like Agiza's computer. It is still in his flat in Karlstad.

Arne Andersson, Säpo, responsible for the expulsion:



(Question): -If the men were engaged in activities that threatened state and public security, why are they not brought to justice in Sweden?

-Well, it doesn't have to go as far as to criminal activities, it can be on the verge, sometimes. And this security risk, it, it was in their very background itself. Leading positions within terror organizations, connections to Al Qaida, and so on.

They were suspected of preparing further terrorist attacks here, from Swedish territory.

Kjell Jönsson, Mohammed Al Zery's Swedish lawyer:

-This is an accusation, a very serious accusation of crime. If, at that time, when he was expelled, there was a reasonable suspicion of such criminality, then he should be informed about the suspicion, and he should have a chance to defend himself. There is, I mean, no ground for this. To inspire fear is, I think not worthy of the Swedish government, as a method of defence when you are in a tight corner.

Speak.:

On location in Cairo, Kalla fakta tries to get an interview with the imprisoned Ahmed Agiza. But the authorities refuse.

Live (in arabic):

Close the wicket! Close the wicket!

Speak.:

But through Agiza's mother we take home a message from him. He dictated it to her when she was last permitted to see him:

"I am not part of any terrorist activity in any form. And my repudiation of Ayman Al Zawaheri and Usama Bin Laden is a well-known fact in islamistic circles."

And he appeals to the Swedish government to let his family stay in Sweden.

"... so that they can grow up and be brought up with Swedish values, principles and moral codes."

Part 3



Hanan Attia, wife of Ahmed Agiza:

-I am afraid . If some of the children are a little bit late, I say OK, they picked them from the street. Why I live in that? Why my children must be afraid all the day? What I do? I don't hurt anybody. I don't believe I am in Sweden really.

Speak.:

Two and a half years have lapsed since Hanan Attia last saw her husband, and the five children their father, Ahmed Agiza. In the family album, there are memories from for instance Iran, and the English-language school the children went to there.

Live:

-I remember this American lady (a teacher)

Speak.:

The eldest son was only three when the family fled Egypt in 1991. The family has since led a roving life in Pakistan, Syria, and Iran, before it came to Sweden in 2 000. The youngest daughter, Kinana , is born here in Karlstad.

Hanan Attia, wife of Ahmed Agiza:

-I came here and feel trustful and I don't want a lot from the world, I want a safe place to grown up children in good environment to be benefit person.

Live

(At the cottage)

-I am the one who does the most fishing.

-Have you won any competition, Hussein?

-No, but I am the on who does the most fishing!



Speak.:

We have chosen not to show the faces of the elder children, out of consideration for their daily life at school. Anders Järliden is one of the Swedes who actively support the family.

Anders Järliden, friend of the family, head of the environment office, Storfors municipality:

-I see them every day, almost. I see children who are professional, I would almost say, to put their heads in the sand like ostriches, to pretend for their own survival that the problems aren't there. To manage daily life at school, and with friends, and generally. But under the surface they are naturally very torn.

Speak.:

A week ago, Kalla fakta could present information, from several pieces of witness evidence, and even from original documents, that Ahmed Agiza and Mohammed Al Zery have been subjected to systematical torture, by electricity among other things, in Egypt.

Hanan and the children also run great risks if they are expelled .

Anders Järliden, friend of the family, head of environment office, Storfors municipality:

-They will not have a chance to support themselves, they can't get work down there, they will be a sort of ostracized parias who will forever have to fear being called to interrogations, with all that may mean.

Hanan Attia, wife of Ahmed Agiza:

-We are at risk to be arrested, and it's a great risk, not a small risk. And we are at risk to be tortured and at risk to be used against him, to put a pressure over him.

Speak.:

The prerequisite - in the Government's decision for the expulsion of the family is the so called guarantee against torture, and inhuman treatment and unfair trial - the guarantee



that the Swedish government now, after Kalla fakta's scrutiny, has admitted that Egypt has broken.

Hanan Attia, wife of Ahmed Agiza:

-They saw what is going on with Ahmed, and they want to send us to the same situation, you understand? I don't understand how they can protect us.

Anders Järliden, friend of the family, head of the environment office, Storfors municipality:

-There is only one consequence to draw, and that is to immediately see to it that the family is given a safe haven in Sweden.

Speak.:

But to the UN committee on Human rights, which has examined the matter, the Swedish government has stated that the assurances given by Egypt are sufficient, and are being respected to the full.

Graphics:

"The Government has had no information which casts doubts over this conclusion."

(From the Swedish government's letter to the UN 6th May 2003.

Speak.:

But this is not correct.

Already at the Swedish ambassador's first visit in the prison, in January 2002, Agiza told how he and Al Zery had been blindfolded all the time, not been permitted to sleep, about beatings and maltreatment, during weeks of interrogation. Statements that the Swedish government immediately stamped Secret, but that Kalla fakta could reveal last week.

Julia Hall, Human Rights Watch:

-Everything that they told him amounts to torture and ill treatment. The only conclusion I can draw from that is that the Swedish government did not want to admit publicly that the men



had been tortured or ill treated upon return. To do so would mean in fact that they had violated the torture principle.

Speak.:

Even in front of another UN body, the UN Committee against torture, Sweden chose not to give account of what the men had told.

Graphics:

"To the Swedish ambassador Ahmed Agiza conveyed no complaint about torture, or how he had been treated."

(From the Swedish government's letter to UN 8th of March 2002.)

Bo Jonasson, Hanan Attia's lawyer:

-Yes, information has been withheld, vital information. Their (the authorities') duty is to present all the material they have, and this they haven't done.

-What is your view on that?

-That is serious, of course.

Kjell Jönsson, Mohammed Al Zery's lawyer:

-There was information from the start about physical violence, and about such treatment that is classified as inhuman and degrading, and about torture. Then they (the authorities) have gone on and deceived and lied to the Swedish controlling body, the Government's constitutional committee, and then they have gone on internationally in front of UN's committee against torture, and the committee that safeguards human rights. You can hardly believe that it's true. That this can happen in Sweden.

Speak.:

Kalla fakta has asked the Foreign office to comment on the criticism. The Foreign office has referred to its head of legal and judicial matters, Carl-Henrik Ehrenkrona, but says that he can't comment on the matter, because he has been away for the weekend, and has not had access to the Foreign office's documents.



Hanan Attia, wife of Ahmed Agiza:

-If she will hear me as example, foreign minister, or migration minister, both of them is ladies. What they can feel if they have five children like me and live in that situation for that long of time. What they can feel? If they feel that their children be in danger to be tortured or to be lost everything.