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Party Says CIA Rendition Flights Went Through Scotland

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EDINBURGH (AP)--An opposition party Wednesday released information about companies that allegedly helped the CIA use Scottish airports to transport criminals or terror suspects from their home countries to nations where harsh interrogation methods are permitted.

The Scottish National Party said it is releasing the dossier of information - which was compiled by an aviation expert - because Scotland's government is ignoring the problem.

The report lists 10 companies that allegedly operated as CIA shell companies and gives the registration numbers of planes that allegedly landed at Prestwick, Glasgow and Edinburgh airports and the dates they did so.

The European Parliament announced last week it would launch its own investigation into allegations of secret CIA prisons in Eastern Europe after E.U. lawmakers said they were frustrated by the lack of progress in probes by various European countries.

The lawmakers agreed to set up a 46-member committee to conduct what will be the first investigation conducted by the European Union. Several E.U. countries have launched their own investigations, as has the Council of Europe, which is Europe's top human rights watchdog.

Angus Robertson, foreign affairs spokesman for the Scottish National Party, Wednesday accused Scottish First Minister Jack McConnell of ignoring the issue of rendition, which involves U.S. officials arresting suspects and transporting them to third countries for interrogation.

A spokeswoman for the Scottish government said it "has no knowledge that Scottish airports have been used for so-called rendition flights."

The planes identified in the dossier included a Gulfstream jet that allegedly was used to transport suspects to the U.S. detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The plane landed five times at Glasgow and Prestwick airports between 2002 and the end of 2004, the report says.

It also identifies a DC-9 plane that has been the subject of debate by the Norwegian government and the Canadian parliament. The plane is listed in the dossier as landing at both Glasgow and Prestwick airports in 2002 and 2003.

"There is disquiet across Europe about this whole issue. This report gives worrying details about alleged rendition flights through Scotland," Robertson said. "The planes in question have been subject to diplomatic and parliamentary inquiries in different countries. This report establishes they did pass through Scottish airports.

He urged the Scottish government drop its "hear no evil, see no evil" policy regarding this issue.

Robertson said copies of the dossier have been sent to First Minister McConnell and committees of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and the U.K. government that are investigating claims about alleged rendition flights.