

# After CIA secret rendition, rights watchdog to target state secrecy

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Strasbourg, France –

Europe's top human rights watchdog is set to turn its attention to state secrecy, the former prosecutor who penned the body's reports on the United States' kidnapping of suspected terrorists and on crime rackets in Kosovo said Thursday.

'I am preparing now a report on the abuse of state secrecy,' Council of Europe parliamentarian Dick Marty told reporters in Strasbourg, France, where he attended a hearing in the European Parliament.

Marty said the report, due to be published in September, will be his last before he retires in October.

'Afterwards I will write my memoirs,' he joked.

State secrecy has blocked investigations in the United States and in Europe over the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)'s 'secret renditions' programme - secret kidnappings of suspected al-Qaeda affiliates on European soil.

But it has been punctured by whistle-blowing website WikiLeaks, with the publication last year of hundred of thousands of confidential US diplomatic cables.

Marty, who in 2006 published the first official report on the CIA's illegal practices, feels vindicated.

'If you read carefully the various WikiLeaks despatches, I think you will find a lot of details that have been confirmed by US diplomatic sources,' he said.

Last year, Marty created another splash with a report on organized crime in Kosovo, in which he claimed that Prime Minister Hashim Thaci was

part of a 'quasi-mafia' crime ring which had been involved in smuggling weapons and drugs and trafficking in human organs.

Thaci has denied the allegations, and pledged to sue for slander. Marty said he has not heard yet from his lawyers.

'I am still a free man,' he joked.

Marty based the report on his investigations, but also quoted open source Western intelligence material. He concluded that the US and EU countries knew about the crimes but turned a blind eye to them.

'What is amazing is that nothing has been done despite all these published reports,' he lamented. The EU's police and justice mission in Kosovo, EULEX, has now promised to look into the case.

'It looks like they are looking at establishing a task force based in Brussels but we don't know yet what competences it will have, who will chair it, whether witnesses will be protected,' he said.

Marty's work on the CIA has earned him some criticism from across the Atlantic.

'Everybody thinks I am anti-American, it is an absolute lie: I was awarded two Awards of Honour by the US Justice Department for my contribution (as a Swiss magistrate) to the fight against drugs,' he said.

This 'strangely' helped him 'access some contacts' when he turned his attention to Kosovan crime, he indicated. He said his report on Thaci and his associates 'broke a taboo: Albanians killed Albanians, while before it was thought that only Serbs had done.'

'This does not change in the slightest the responsibility of the Serbs (but) good is not all on one side and evil all on the other: things are a little more complicated, this is what I tried to show,' he said.

By Alvise Armellini □□□□□