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30 Guantanamo prisoners ordered to stay

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SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico -- The U.S. military has ordered 30 terror suspects to remain held at the prison camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, while six prisoners were ordered released after tribunals determined they were incorrectly held as "enemy combatants," an official said Friday.

The rulings brought to 440 the number of prisoners ordered to remain in custody after their cases went before the Combatant Status Review Tribunals, said Navy Capt. Beci Brenton, a Pentagon spokeswoman.

Eighteen detainees have been ordered released, though only one has been freed, she said. The rest remain at the U.S. naval base pending discussions about their transfer between the State Department and their home governments, Brenton said.

The military has refused to explain its decisions or provide information about the prisoners, including how long they have been held at Guantanamo.

The tribunals ended in December after considering the cases of 558 detainees from more than 40 countries. Rulings on 100 cases are pending.

The government has argued that "enemy combatant" - a classification that includes anyone who supported Afghanistan's ousted Taliban regime or the al-Qaida terrorist network - are not entitled to the same legal protections as prisoners of war under the Geneva Conventions.

Several judicial decisions, however, have undermined that argument, upholding the detainees' rights to challenge their incarcerations in U.S. courts.

Many detainees have been held for three years, and only four have been charged. At the review tribunals, they were not allowed attorneys present and were only told unclassified portions of the allegations against them.

The same rules apply to new proceedings that could free prisoners determined no longer to have intelligence value or pose a threat to the United States and its allies. The Administrative Review Boards have considered the cases of 48 prisoners since they began in December, Brenton said.

Journalists have been barred from the new proceedings, and the military has refused to provide information about them.

The Associated Press has filed a Freedom of Information Act request for details of the hearings, including transcripts of testimonies.