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## **Judge dismisses Guantanamo prisoner cases**

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WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A federal judge has dismissed the cases of seven Guantanamo Bay prisoners who sought to challenge the lawfulness of their continued detention.

"To the extent that these non-resident detainees have rights, they are subject to both the military review process already in place and the laws Congress has passed defining the appropriate scope of military conduct towards the detainees," U.S. District Judge Richard Leon said.

"The extent to which these rights and conditions should be modified or extended is a matter for the political branches to determine," he wrote in the 34-page opinion.

Until the Congress or U.S. President George W. Bush acts further, he concluded there is "no viable legal theory" under which a federal court could issue the writ of habeas corpus sought by the detainees.

Leon said foreign nationals captured and detained outside the United States have no recognisable constitutional rights.

About 550 people are being held at the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, after being detained during the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan and in other operations in the U.S. "war against terrorism."

Bush administration attorneys have argued the prisoners have no constitutional rights and their lawsuits, challenging the conditions of their confinement and seeking their release, must be dismissed.

Cases have been brought in federal court in Washington by more than 60 Guantanamo prisoners. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June that the prisoners could bring the cases.

Although Leon, who was appointed to the bench by Bush, dismissed the cases before him, U.S. District Judge Joyce Hens Green is deciding whether the cases of 10 other Guantanamo prisoners can go forward.

The lawyers for the 10 detainees have argued that they have the right to a fair trial and should be given the proper opportunity to defend themselves.

Leon's ruling involved one French national, an Algerian and five Algerian-Bosnian citizens.

"In the final analysis, the petitioners are asking this court to do something no federal court has done before: evaluate the legality of the executive's capture and detention of non-resident aliens, outside the United States, during a time of armed conflict," he said.