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Guantanamo Inmate Wins Right to Live in Germany

Reuters

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BERLIN - A Turkish man held since 2002 in the U.S. prison camp at Guantanamo Bay can keep his German residency status despite being out of the country for longer than six months, a German court ruled on Wednesday.

German authorities had attempted to revoke the residence permit of Murat Kurnaz, 23, because he had exceeded the six-month limit and had not applied for an extension.

However, his lawyer, Bernhard Docke, said the court ruled this was not justified because Kurnaz was being held abroad against his will.

Docke told Reuters the court decision was a proof that "the spirit of Guantanamo has not been imported into German law."

Kurnaz, who was born in Germany to Turkish parents but is a Turkish national, was in the process of becoming a German citizen when he was arrested in Pakistan in late 2001. Persons born in Germany do not automatically get German citizenship.

Branded an "unlawful combatant," he has been in the U.S. military prison in Cuba since the beginning of 2002 on suspicion that he supported Afghanistan's radical Islamist Taliban and possibly al Qaeda.

Kurnaz, dubbed by the media the "Bremen Taliban" after the north Germany city where he lived, alleges he has suffered abuse and interrogation techniques including sexual humiliation, underwater suffocation and the desecration of Islam.