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Guantánamo must be closed!

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### **Good News: Murat Kurnaz released from Guantánamo!**

*“Thank God, I am well, but just God that created us knows when I will come back”*

Murat Kurnaz wrote these words to his family from Guantánamo in March 2002. His dreams of returning home to Germany have only now, finally, been realised.

Released from Guantánamo on 24 August 2006, Murat Kurnaz had been held for four years and eight months without charge or trial. The only contact he had been allowed with his family was through heavily censored letters.

In a statement, his German lawyer said: “He is now again in the circle of his family. Their joy at embracing their lost son again is indescribable”.

Murat’s mother, Rabiye Kurnaz has dedicated these past years to campaigning for her eldest son’s release. In November 2005 she attended an international conference organized by Amnesty International and Reprieve where she spoke of her hopes of being reunited with her son. Now these hopes have become a reality.

Murat Kuraz is a Turkish national who was born in Germany in 1982. His prolonged detention in Guantánamo had been complicated by his status – lacking German citizenship, the German authorities had refused his return to Germany. The Turkish authorities had shown little interest in his case.

It was only after intense lobbying from his family, lawyers and AI members around the world, including in his home town of Bremen, that the German authorities began to act on his behalf, finally paving the way for his return.

Murat Kuraz had been arrested in Pakistan in November 2001. Soon afterwards he was transferred to US custody in Kandahar, Afghanistan. His family learnt that he was held in Guantánamo in January 2002 and received the first letter from him in March that year. He has alleged that he was subjected to torture and ill-treatment while in US custody.

Like many others held at Guantánamo, Murat Kurnaz was held for years despite little evidence to link him to “terrorist” activities. Both US and German intelligence services had secretly acknowledged this, yet it took years to secure his release. In January 2005, a US federal judge cited his case as illustrative of the inherent unfairness and fundamental flaws of the administrative review process the military authorities conduct in Guantánamo

Murat Kurnaz is finally reunited with his family, but the effects of his long-term detention in Guantánamo will remain. His release is a victory for human rights, but also serves as a reminder that more than 400 men remain detained. Under the administrative review procedure, about 300 of these detainees are currently neither slated for release nor transfer to the custody of another government.

AI members worldwide continue to call on US authorities to close Guantánamo and for the release or fair trial of all those held. AI also continues to lobby governments to act on behalf of people from their countries – residents or nationals – detained at Guantánamo.

Take action to close Guantánamo!