
Judge Orders Mahmoud Khalil's Case moved to New Jersey, blocks deportation



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A U.S. court has rejected the Trump administration's attempt to dismiss Palestinian student activist Mahmoud Khalil's legal challenge to his detention and has ordered the case transferred from Louisiana to New Jersey.

Khalil, a U.S. permanent resident and Columbia University graduate, was arrested on March 8 by immigration officers for participating in 2024 campus protests against the war in Gaza. Initially held in New York, he was later transferred to a detention facility in Jena, Louisiana. His legal team argued that this move was an attempt to avoid a hearing in New York or New Jersey, where his case was originally filed.

In a ruling on Wednesday, District Judge Jesse Furman stated that New Jersey was the appropriate jurisdiction for Khalil's case and upheld his earlier order blocking the activist's deportation while legal proceedings continue. However, he did not grant Khalil's request for immediate release.

In a letter from detention, Khalil described himself as a "political prisoner" targeted for "exercising my right to free speech." His arrest has been linked to President Donald Trump's vow to crack down on student demonstrators accused of "un-American activity."

Khalil's lawyer, Samah Sisay, condemned the government's actions, stating that he should be "home with his wife awaiting the birth of their first child." His wife, a U.S. citizen, is eight months pregnant.

While Khalil has not been charged with any crime, his lawyers argue that his detention reflects a broader effort to suppress student activism. The U.S. Justice Department has not commented on

the ruling.