

Judge clarifies Hale limits - His lawyers don't have to sign edict about messages

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Matthew Hale 's communications will continue to be closely monitored, but a federal judge ruled Thursday that his lawyers don't have to sign a document stating they won't forward messages from the jailed white supremacist to others.

Hale, 31, leader of the World Church of the Creator, is in the Metropolitan Correctional Center in downtown Chicago under rarely used special administrative measures as he awaits trial on charges he plotted to kill a federal judge in Chicago.

The restrictions, ordered by U.S. Atty. Gen. John Ashcroft on March 3, are based on the theory that Hale could incite violence among his followers. They prohibit him from communicating with others through the media, mail, telephone and visitors.

But at a hearing in Hammond, U.S. District Judge James Moody held that federal regulations don't require Hale's lawyers to pledge that they will abide by the special measures.

Hale's attorneys, Thomas Durkin and Patrick Blegen, had refused to sign an affirmation. Because of that, they said, they have been blocked from having private talks with their client for more than a month.

After the judge's ruling, Assistant U.S. Atty. David Weisman was granted a stay of the judge's order until 5 p.m. Monday so he can consult with U.S. Atty. Patrick Fitzgerald, head of Illinois' Northern District. Weisman declined to say whether an appeal is planned.

The judge, who is based in Hammond, was assigned the case because the federal judges in Chicago know Hale's alleged target. Hale's trial is scheduled to start Sept. 22 in Chicago.

Hale, of East Peoria, was arrested Jan. 8 in Chicago's federal courthouse as he arrived for a contempt-of-court hearing.

Since then, he has been held without bond on charges that he solicited one of his followers to kill U.S. District Judge Joan Humphrey Lefkow. Hale had labeled her a "corrupt judge" and "probable Jew" after she tried to enforce a higher court's ruling for him to destroy printed materials about his church that violated trademark laws.

Durkin said Hale's parents have been served subpoenas to testify before a grand jury and that it is his suspicion that others close to Hale might still be charged. Prosecutors declined to comment on the possibility of additional charges.

Durkin said he still plans to challenge the constitutionality of the special measures placed on Hale, who spoke in private briefly with Durkin during breaks in the court hearing.

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