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Denying Holocaust is a crime even in mail -court

MUNICH, Germany, March 6 (Reuter) - Bavaria's highest court affirmed on Wednesday that spreading lies about the Holocaust -- even in private letters -- violates German law.

The Munich judges ordered a lower court to reconsider its decision to drop defamation charges against a 63-year-old man who in letters to members of parliament had denied the existence of gas chambers at the Nazis' Auschwitz death camp.

Denying Hitler's mass extermination of European Jewry is illegal in Germany. The Regensburg lower court, however, had ruled that sending letters to a limited number of people did not constitute propagating a denial.

But the southern state's highest court said the man had clearly wanted to affect the legislative process by sending his letters. This constituted an attempt to propagate his views, the court ruled.

"No one can rely on guaranteed freedom of speech to protect expressions that deny the historic fact that Jews were murdered with poison gas in Auschwitz," the court ruled.

It said the man had sent his letters to a large number of people and had indicated his views could be passed on.

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