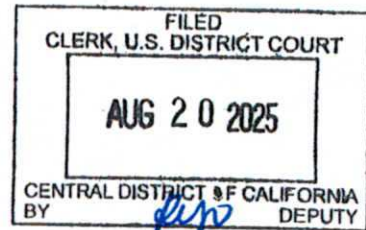


Fee Paid

DARLA PALACIO SAMBISSA

Email: tikvahbeit@gmail.com

Darla Palacio Sambissa, Next Friend Petitioner
Christopher Sambissa, Alien Detainee
Petitioners



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
WESTERN DIVISION**

DARLA PALACIO SAMBISSA,
Next Friend Petitioner,

CHRISTOPHER SAMBISSA
Alien Detainee A

Petitioners,

vs.

ROBERT EZELL, in his official capacity as
Warden of the Torrance Detention Facility;
TODD LYONS, in his official capacity as
Director of Immigration and Customs
Enforcement; **KRISTI NOEM** in her official
capacity as Secretary of the United States
Department of Homeland Security; **PAM
BONDI**, in her official capacity as Attorney
General of the United States

Respondents.

Case No.: 2:25-W-07801-SB-AJR

**PETITION FOR WRIT
OF HABEAS CORPUS**

I. Introduction

1. This is petition for writ of habeas corpus filed on behalf of Petitioner, Christopher Sambissa, a non-citizen currently detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") at the Torrance County Detention Center in Estancia, New Mexico. Petitioner challenges his unlawful

1 arrest and subsequent detention based on the lack of probable cause for the initial arrest in violation
2 of the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution.

3 2. Petitioner was arrested on June 12, 2025, by ICE agents in Los Angeles, California. At the time
4 of the arrest, agents lacked the constitutionally required probable cause to believe that Petitioner had
5 committed an immigration violation and was likely to escape before a warrant could be obtained.
6 Petitioner's continued detention, stemming from this unlawful arrest, violates his Fifth Amendment
7 right to due process.

8 II. Jurisdiction and Venue

9 3. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241 (habeas corpus); 28
10 U.S.C. § 1651 (All Writs Act); 28 U.S.C. § 1331 (federal question jurisdiction); Article I, Section 9,
11 Clause 2, of the U.S. Constitution (the suspension clause); and Article III of the U.S. Constitution.
12 The Central District of California serves as the pivotal venue for addressing the jurisdictional issues
13 surrounding Sambissa's habeas petition, as it is here that the alleged probable cause for his arrest
14 originated. Although Sambissa is no longer physically located in Los Angeles, the essence of his
15 petition revolves around the purported infringement of his rights at the time of his initial arrest within
16 this district. In *Rumsfeld v. Padilla*, 542 U.S. 426 (2004), the Supreme Court established that the
17 appropriate respondent in a habeas corpus case is the immediate custodian; however, this precedent
18 primarily addressed military detention scenarios. In contrast, Sambissa's case, rooted in an unlawful
19 arrest as defined by the new 9th Circuit ruling in the case of *Perdomo v. Noem*, presents a unique
20 circumstance where the fundamental claim is intrinsically linked to the Central District of California.

21 III. Parties

22 4. Petitioner, **Christopher Sambissa**, is a non-citizen residing at [REDACTED]
23 Angeles, California 90047.

24 5. Respondent, **Kristi Noem**, is the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security and is
25 responsible for the operations of DHS, including ICE.

26 6. Respondent, **Todd Lyons**, is the Acting Director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement
27 and is responsible for overseeing the agency's enforcement and removal operations.
28

1 7. Respondent, **Pam Bondi**, is the Attorney General of the United States and is responsible
2 for providing legal support and guidance to ICE personnel.

3 8. Respondent, **Robert Ezell**, is the Warden of the Torrance County Detention Center where
4 Petitioner is currently detained.

5 III. Factual Background

6 9. Petitioner Christopher Sambissa ("Sambissa"), a citizen of the United Kingdom, entered the
7 United States legally in 2019 under the *Visa Waiver Program*. Unfortunately, he subsequently
8 overstayed the terms of his visa. In a significant turn of events, Sambissa married Darla Palacio
9 Sambissa, a U.S. citizen, and took steps to adjust his immigration status by submitting Forms I-130
10 and Form I-485 to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). This application
11 for adjustment of status was pending at the time of the incident that would lead to his arrest,
12 highlighting his commitment to regularizing his immigration status in accordance with U.S. law.

13 10. On June 12, 2025, at approximately 5:09 p.m., while driving in Los Angeles to purchase baby
14 supplies for his newborn daughter, Sambissa became aware of several unmarked police vehicles
15 following him with their lights activated. In an attempt to comply with what he believed to be routine
16 traffic situation; he pulled over to allow the vehicles to pass. However, the officers maneuvered their
17 cars to block his vehicle, exiting with their firearms drawn, specifically AR-15 assault rifles.
18 Identifying themselves as agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), they demanded
19 Sambissa's identification and informed him that he was under arrest for overstaying his visa.

20 11. It is crucial to note that Sambissa faces cognitive challenges and has limited proficiency in
21 English, having been born in the Republic of Congo. See Exhibit "A"-Mental Health Documentation.
22 This language barrier and his cognitive deficiencies hindered his ability to understand the situation
23 unfolding around him. During the encounter, the ICE agents made derogatory remarks about his
24 accent and mental capabilities, further exacerbating his distress. Despite Sambissa's attempts to
25 communicate that he had a pending application for adjustment of status and could have his wife verify
26 this information, the agents proceeded with the arrest. After contacting his wife, who confirmed the
27 pending petition, the agents acknowledged Sambissa's lack of a criminal record and any negative
28

1 immigration history but nonetheless detained him.¹ He was subsequently transported to an
2 immigration detention facility in Los Angeles, then moved to El Paso, Texas, for processing, and
3 ultimately transferred to the Torrance County Detention Center in Estancia, New Mexico, where he
4 remains in custody.

5 IV. Next Friend Petitioner:

6 12. Darla Palacio Sambissa respectfully submits that she is fully qualified to act on behalf of her
7 husband, Christopher Sambissa, in this habeas corpus petition. Sambissa suffers from significant
8 cognitive impairments, as detailed in Exhibit "A", which render him incapable of effectively pursuing
9 his own legal interests. These deficiencies not only hinder his ability to understand the complexities
10 of the legal process but also prevent him from articulating his needs and concerns adequately.
11 Furthermore, Sambissa's background as a native of the Republic of the Congo complicates matters,
12 as he lacks sufficient proficiency in English to navigate the legal system or to represent himself in
13 this critical matter.

14 13. The Supreme Court's ruling in *Whitmore v. Arkansas*, 499 U.S. 149 (1990), underscores the
15 necessity of demonstrating a real party in interest's inability to litigate due to such disabilities, a
16 condition that Sambissa clearly meets as evidenced in Exhibit "A". His cognitive limitations and
17 language barriers create a substantial obstacle to his ability to advocate for himself, thereby
18 necessitating the involvement of a next friend.

19 V. Legal Framework-Grounds for Relief:

20 14. Sambissa's detention is unlawful and violates his Fourth and Fifth Amendment rights because
21 the arrest was made without probable cause. The fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution protects
22 individuals from unreasonable search and seizures, including arrest without probable cause. Probable
23 cause requires a reasonable belief, based on objective facts and circumstances, that a crime has been
24 committed or that a person is connected to criminal activity.

25 15. In the immigration context, ICE officers may make a warrantless arrest for an immigration
26 violation if they have reason to believe that the individual is in the U.S. unlawfully and is *likely to*
27 *escape*. Factors such as known residence, immediate family members, and employment are relevant
28

1 in determining whether there is probable cause that the individual might escape. In Sambissa's case,
2 ICE agents did not have reasonable grounds to believe that he was likely to escape.

3 16. Sambissa has resided in the United States for nearly eight years, during which time he has
4 established a stable and fulfilling life. Recently, on February 14, 2025, he married a U.S. citizen,
5 further solidifying his commitment to his life in this country. Their family recently welcomed a
6 newborn daughter on  2025, which has only deepened his ties to the community. His wife
7 operates a childcare business, and Sambissa plays an integral role in its management, contributing to
8 both the family's livelihood and the local economy. This involvement not only demonstrates his
9 dedication to his family but also highlights his active participation in the community.

10 17. In addition to his family and professional commitments, Sambissa has maintained a clean
11 record, with no criminal history or negative immigration issues. His character is further evidenced by
12 his active engagement in his local church, where he has built relationships and contributed positively
13 to the community. These factors collectively illustrate that Sambissa is a responsible and law-abiding
14 individual who has established a life rooted in stability and community involvement.

15 18. At the time of his arrest, Sambissa had a pending application for adjustment of status, which
16 was likely to be approved by USCIS given his circumstances. This pending application serves as a
17 clear indication of his intention to comply with immigration laws and his desire to secure his status
18 in the United States. The absence of any compelling evidence to suggest that he posed a flight risk
19 further calls into question the justification for his arrest. It is evident that Sambissa had every
20 incentive to remain in the country and continue building his life here, making the basis for his arrest
21 not only questionable but also unfounded.

22 19. Therefore, the warrantless arrest was unconstitutional, and any subsequent detention based on
23 that arrest is unlawful.

24 VI. Prayer for Relief:

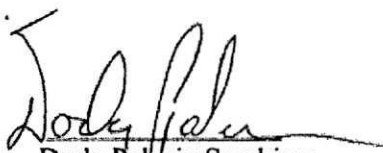
25 20. Petitioner Sambissa respectfully requests this Court to:

- 26 • Issue a writ of habeas corpus, ordering Respondents to produce Petitioner and show cause
27 for his detention.

- Declare Petitioner's arrest and detention unlawful and unconstitutional.
- Order Petitioner's immediate release from detention.
- Grant such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.

VII. Verification:

I, Darla Palacio Sambissa, declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.


Darla Palacio Sambissa

Date: 8/19/2025

EXHIBIT

A

Mental Health Documentation

Enika Brown MSW, CLC, PPSC
Certified Life Coach & Counselor
4858 W. Pico Blvd #151
LA CA. 90019



7/30/25

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Christopher Sambissa who is currently involved in immigration proceedings. I have been working closely with Christopher as a life coach and personal development counselor for the past 2 years, during which time I've come to understand the nature of his cognitive impairments and the sincere efforts he makes to function day-to-day despite these limitations.

Christopher lives with cognitive disabilities that include **limited short-term memory, difficulty with executive functioning, processing delays, and language comprehension deficits**. These challenges significantly impair his ability to complete forms, follow written instructions, and engage with bureaucratic systems that require high levels of reading comprehension, sequencing, and decision-making. He struggles to understand the nuances of the English language, particularly when it comes to formal or legal writing. As a result, he has misinterpreted important documents and misunderstood instructions despite having no intention of being non-compliant.

In our coaching sessions, we have worked on building basic comprehension strategies and routines to help him better manage everyday tasks. Even with regular support, he continues to experience confusion when reading or writing in English—often interpreting questions literally or missing implied meanings. For example, he needed extensive guidance just to understand common forms or appointment letters, and often requires verbal explanation, repetition, and clarification. Without direct, simplified, and patient support, he is unable to navigate most administrative or official processes independently.

Christopher is a dedicated father and family member. His well-being is deeply tied to his relationship with his children and his wife. Removing him from this stable, familiar environment would cause serious emotional and cognitive distress and would also separate him from the very people who provide the structure and care essential to his functioning. His family not only supports his daily life but also anchors him emotionally and helps prevent isolation and mental deterioration.

I respectfully urge the Immigration department to consider the full scope of Christopher's disability and the reality that his difficulties are neurological—not intentional. He requires ongoing support to maintain safety, structure, and well-being, and his family and community play a critical role in this support system. In my professional opinion, a

disruption to that structure would be significantly harmful to his mental and emotional health.

Please feel free to contact me if you need any further information or documentation.

Sincerely,

Enika Brown MSW, CLC, PPSC
Certified Life Coach & Counselor

Enika Brown



ASPIRATION
CREATION
ELEVATION

To whom this may concern,

My name is Cherelle Grant, and I am a youth mentor at Aspiration Creation Elevation. I support young people who may experience difficulties in school, come from disadvantaged communities, or face challenging home environments.

I am writing to you as Christopher Sambissa's previous mentor. I have had the privilege of working with Christopher for several years, beginning when he was just 12 years old, and I am well acquainted with the many circumstances he has faced throughout this time.

Christopher has experienced difficulty concentrating on simple tasks and is very hyperactive, which means he always needs to be engaged in some form of activity.

When assisting him with administrative tasks, I observed that his comprehension skills were below what would typically be expected for his age, and he was unable to complete these tasks without support.

Despite these challenges, Christopher is a determined and driven individual who consistently demonstrates resilience and a strong will to succeed. Should you require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Cherelle Grant



Cherelle@aceciteam.com

EXHIBIT

B

Marriage Certificate

EXHIBIT

C

Form I-797C Notice of Action

U.S. Department of Homeland Security



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

We have rejected your benefit request for the reasons indicated on Form I-797C, Notice of Action. Your rejected benefit request will not retain a filing date. You may resubmit your benefit request as a new filing if you are able to correct the issue that caused the rejection.

If you do file the benefit request again, please note the following:

- Since your submission was rejected, it is not yet considered properly filed.
- You must meet all requirements as of the date of the new filing.
- Please review the relevant form instructions to determine if your new filing can be considered as timely filed. If you have any questions regarding the rejected filing, please contact lockboxsupport@uscis.dhs.gov.

If you do submit your benefit request again, please enclose this letter with your submission.

Place this letter on top of your
new filing package

Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Form I-797C, Notice of Action

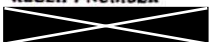
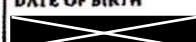
THIS NOTICE DOES NOT GRANT ANY IMMIGRATION STATUS OR BENEFIT.

NOTICE TYPE Rejection Notice		NOTICE DATE July 01, 2025	
CASE TYPE I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status		USCIS ALIEN NUMBER	
RECEIPT NUMBER 	RECEIVED DATE June 18, 2025	DATE OF BIRTH 	PAGE 1 of 1
APPLICANT/PETITIONER NAME AND MAILING ADDRESS CHRISTOPHER SAMBISSA 			
This is in reference to the I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status, you submitted. Your I-485, fees, and any supporting documentation is being returned to you for the following reason(s): The payment amount provided does not match the required amount according to what you have selected on the form, or no payment amount has been provided. Please review the Fee Schedule, Form G-1055, at uscis.gov/G-1055 for the latest fee information. Please resubmit the application/petition package with the appropriate fees to the address listed on the bottom of this page. Please be sure to complete the application fully, submit the appropriate fees, and include all required supporting documentation. If your Form I-693, Report of Immigration Medical Examination and Vaccination Record was returned (with the sealed envelope opened/unsealed) with the rejected package, then if and when you file a new Form I-485, you may resubmit your previously submitted Form I-693, its original envelope, and any supporting documentation that was previously included by the civil surgeon, with a copy of this notice. If you submitted a G-1450 Authorization for Credit Card Transaction, your submitted G-1450 has been destroyed. If you have questions, please visit the USCIS Contact Center at www.uscis.gov/contactcenter to connect with a live USCIS representative in English or Spanish. If you have any questions or comments regarding this notice or the status of your case, please contact the USCIS Contact Center. You will be notified separately about any other case you may have filed.			
USCIS OFFICE ADDRESS USCIS P. O. Box 805887 Chicago, IL 60680		USCIS CONTACT CENTER NUMBER (800)375-5283 APPLICANT COPY 	

Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Form I-797C, Notice of Action

THIS NOTICE DOES NOT GRANT ANY IMMIGRATION STATUS OR BENEFIT.

NOTICE TYPE Rejection Notice		NOTICE DATE July 01, 2025									
CASE TYPE I-130, Petition for Alien Relative		USCIS ALIEN NUMBER									
RECEIPT NUMBER 	RECEIVED DATE June 18, 2025	DATE OF BIRTH 	PAGE 1 of 1								
APPLICANT/PETITIONER NAME AND MAILING ADDRESS DARLA PALACIO SAMBISSA 											
The I-130, Petition for Alien Relative you submitted has been received by our office for the following beneficiaries: <table border="0"><tr><td>Name</td><td>Date of Birth</td><td>Country of Birth</td><td>Class (If Applicable)</td></tr><tr><td>SAMBISSA, CHRISTOPHER</td><td></td><td>REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO</td><td></td></tr></table>				Name	Date of Birth	Country of Birth	Class (If Applicable)	SAMBISSA, CHRISTOPHER		REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO	
Name	Date of Birth	Country of Birth	Class (If Applicable)								
SAMBISSA, CHRISTOPHER		REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO									
Your I-130, fees, and any supporting documentation is being returned to you for the following reason(s): The payment amount provided does not match the required amount according to what you have selected on the form, or no payment amount has been provided. Please review the Fee Schedule, Form G-1055, at uscis.gov/G-1055 for the latest fee information. Please resubmit the application/petition package with the appropriate fees to the address listed on the bottom of this page. Please be sure to complete the petition fully, submit the appropriate fees, and include all required supporting documentation. If you submitted a G-1450 Authorization for Credit Card Transaction, your submitted G-1450 has been destroyed. If you have questions, please visit the USCIS Contact Center at www.uscis.gov/contactcenter to connect with a live USCIS representative in English or Spanish. If you have any questions or comments regarding this notice or the status of your case, please contact the USCIS Contact Center. You will be notified separately about any other case you may have filed.											
USCIS OFFICE ADDRESS USCIS P. O. Box 805887 Chicago, IL 60680		USCIS CONTACT CENTER NUMBER (800)375-5283 APPLICANT COPY 									

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Israel Ben-Abraham, hereby certify that on this date, I filed this **PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS**, I will furthermore mail a copy by USPS Certified Priority Mail with Return Receipts to each of the following individuals:

**United States Attorney's Office
Attn: Bilal A. Essayli
312 North Spring Street, 12th Floor
Los Angeles, California**

**United States Department of Justice
Office of the U.S. Attorney General
Attn: Pam Bondi
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530**

**United States Department of Homeland Security
Attn: Secretary Kristi Noem
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20528-0525**

**United States Department of Immigration & Custom Enforcement
Attn: Director Todd Lyons
500 12th Street SW #5600
Washington, DC 20536**

**Torrance County Detention Facility
Robert Ezell-Warden
209 E. Allen Ayers Rd.
Estancia, New Mexico 87016**

Dated: ~~July 31, 2025~~

8/19/2025

Respectfully Submitted

Israel Ben-Abraham

