

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
SAN ANTONIO DIVISION**

Johel Isaac Pereira-Verdi,

Petitioner,

-v-

Todd M. Lyons, Acting Director of US ICE;
Miguel Vergara, San Antonio Field Office
Director, US Immigration and Customs
Enforcement; Sirce E. Owen, Acting Director
of the Executive Office for Immigration
Review; Warden, Karnes County Immigration
Processing Center,

Respondents.

Case No: 5:25-cv-1187

**Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus
Under 28 U.S.C. § 2241**

INTRODUCTION

Petitioner Johel Isaac Pereira-Verdi is an asylum seeker who has been in the United States for more than three years. He was unlawfully detained by Respondents on September 2, 2025, and is being held subject to mandatory detention without bond. Respondents detained him without justification and in violation of their order releasing him on his own recognizance. Petitioner has every reason to be granted bond; he is married to a Lawful Permanent Resident, he is waiting for USCIS to process the renewal of his Temporary Protected Status, and he has complied with all immigration requirements for more than three years in the United States.

Without intervention by this Court, Petitioner will be subject to indefinite detention without the possibility of release on bond. For these reasons, he prays that this Court will grant him the opportunity to a fair bond hearing and release from his unlawful detention.

JURISDICTION

1. This action arises under the Constitution of the United States and the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), 8 U.S.C. § 1101 et seq.
2. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 (habeas corpus), 28 U.S.C. § 1331 (federal question), and Article I, § 9, cl. 2 of the United States Constitution (Suspension Clause).
3. This Court has jurisdiction over the claims asserted in this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331, 28 U.S.C. § 1361, and 28 U.S.C. § 1651 because Petitioner asks this Court to compel Respondents, officers of the United States, to perform their duties owed under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a).
4. The jurisdiction of this Court is also invoked pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201-02 which authorizes the issuance of declaratory judgments.
5. Petitioner seeks costs and fees pursuant to the Equal Access to Justice Act, 5 U.S.C. § 504 and 28 U.S.C. § 2412(2) et seq.
6. This Court may grant relief under the habeas corpus statutes, 28 U.S.C. § 2241 et seq., the Declaratory Judgment Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2201 et seq., and the All Writs Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1651.

VENUE

7. Venue is proper in this District because Petitioner is detained at the Karnes County Immigration Processing Center located at 409 FM 1144, Karnes City, TX 78118, which is within the jurisdiction of this District.
8. Venue is proper in this District because Respondents are officers, employees, or agencies of the United States and a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to Petitioner's claims occurred in this District. Petitioner was detained at 3523 Crosspoint, San Antonio, TX 78217.

PARTIES

9. Petitioner is an applicant for asylum who is being detained at the Karnes County Immigration Processing Center in Karnes City, Texas. Petitioner is under the direct control and in the custody of Respondents and their agents.
10. Respondent Todd M. Lyons is the Acting Director of US ICE. Respondent is the legal custodian of Petitioner and has the direct authority to release Petitioner. Todd M. Lyons is sued in his official capacity.
11. Respondent Miguel Vergara is the San Antonio Field Office Director of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Respondent is the legal custodian of Petitioner and has the direct authority to release Petitioner. Miguel Vergara is sued in his official capacity.
12. Respondent Sirce E. Owen is the Acting Director of the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). She has the legal authority to order an immigration judge to provide Petitioner a bond hearing. She is sued in her official capacity.

13. The Warden of the Karnes County Immigration Processing Center is sued as the direct custodian of Petitioner. The Warden's name is not publicly listed on any materials that were available at the time of filing. He or she is sued in his or her official capacity.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

14. Petitioner came to the United States seeking asylum. He entered the United States without inspection or admission on November 20, 2021, and was assigned alien number



15. Petitioner's immigration proceedings take place within the immigration courts administered by EOIR. Due to no fault of Petitioner's, his application has been pending with the courts since approximately September 6, 2022. EOIR has rescheduled his final merits hearings at least two times during this period.
16. Following Petitioner's entry to the United States, he was detained for approximately nine days. He was released from detention on or around December 1, 2021.
17. At the time of his release, Respondents informed Petitioner that he had "been arrested and placed in removal proceedings. In accordance with section 236 of the Immigration and Nationality Act [8 U.S.C. § 1226] and the applicable provisions of Title 8 of the Code of Federal Regulations, you are being released on your own recognizance provided you comply with the following conditions..." See Exhibit A.
18. After his release, Petitioner was free without bond and complied with all conditions of his release. He attended all hearings in immigration court and all appointments with Respondents.
19. Petitioner was detained by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers when he reported to his required check-in appointment in San Antonio, Texas on September 2,

2025. He was not provided any reason for his detention and his release on his own recognizance was not vacated or modified.

20. Petitioner was granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) on or before July 25, 2024 and his request to renew that status has been pending with US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) since January 12, 2025. His TPS status protects Petitioner from removal from the United States. *See* Exhibit B.
21. Petitioner is married to a lawful permanent resident of the United States. His spouse filed a petition for him on August 16, 2025 and USCIS is reviewing that petition at this time. If approved, Petitioner will be eligible to apply for adjustment of status with USCIS. *See* Exhibit C.
22. Petitioner continues to be unlawfully detained by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

COUNT I

Violation of Fifth Amendment Right to Due Process

23. The above paragraphs are realleged and incorporated herein.
24. The Department of Homeland Security is detaining Petitioner under “mandatory detention” authority reserved for aliens who are in the process of entering the United States, 8 U.S.C. § 1225.
25. Respondents have determined that Petitioner is ineligible for bond and must be detained due to a recent change in policy, despite having resided in the United States for more than three years without being detained.

26. The Executive Office for Immigration Review issued a precedential decision holding that immigration judges unequivocally have no jurisdiction to entertain granting bond in Petitioner's exact circumstances, *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025). This decision is contrary to the previous interpretation of the relevant statutes which has persisted for more than two decades and through various administrations.
27. Petitioner was not arriving in the United States at the time of detention and he had been in the United States for more than three years. His detention is therefore unlawful because he is being subjected to mandatory detention provisions which did not apply to him at the time of his detention.
28. Petitioner should be eligible for immigration bond under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and release from detention because he is not properly subject to mandatory detention.
29. Petitioner is also seeking to renew Temporary Protected Status. This relief would prevent Respondents from removing him from the United States. Pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1254a(d)(4), "An alien provided temporary protected status under this section shall not be detained by the Attorney General on the basis of the alien's immigration status in the United States." But for USCIS' unreasonable delay in adjudicating his application, Petitioner would be in Temporary Protected Status at this time.
30. The unlawful detention of Petitioner is a violation of his rights under the Fifth Amendment of the US Constitution.

COUNT II

Violation of Petitioner's Order of Release

31. The allegations in the above paragraphs are realleged and incorporated herein.
32. Regulations at 8 CFR § 236.1(c)(9) and (g) require specific procedures to release or revoke the release of an individual. This regulation also limits the authority to make these decisions to specific enumerated officers.
33. At the time Petitioner was detained, Petitioner's release on his own recognizance had not been lawfully revoked.
34. Respondents violated the provisions at 8 CFR § 236.1(c)(9) because they did not make individualized findings specific to Petitioner's circumstances.
35. Respondents violated the provisions at 8 CFR § 236.1(c)(9) because Petitioner's custody determination was not rendered by one of the specified officers.
36. Petitioner's detention is unlawful because the Department of Homeland Security violated the regulations and procedures at 8 CFR § 236.1(c)(9).
37. This unlawful detention and violation of existing regulations also violates the Administrative Procedure Act. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 706(2).

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Petitioner respectfully asks that the Court:

- A. Assume jurisdiction over this matter;
- B. Issue an Order to Show Cause ordering Respondents to show cause why this Petition should not be granted within three days;
- C. Order that Respondents not transfer Petitioner from the Western District of Texas;

- D. Order that Respondents not remove Petitioner from the United States until the Court has ordered otherwise;
- E. Order that Respondents grant Petitioner's request for a bond hearing pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within seven days of this Court's order;
- F. Order that Respondents demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that Petitioner's continued detention is justified;
- G. Order that Respondents release Petitioner should they fail to provide a bond hearing for Petitioner;
- H. Award Petitioner attorney's fees and costs under the Equal Access to Justice Act, and on any other basis justified under law; and
- I. Grant any further relief this Court deems just and proper.

VERIFICATION

On Petitioner's behalf, I, Joseph Krebs Muller, verify that the factual statements made in the foregoing Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Joseph Krebs Muller

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