



2. Respondent MIGUEL VERGARA, in his official capacity as Field Office Director of ICE Enforcement Removal Operations Harlingen Field Office and has refused to effect Petitioner's release from unlawful custody at the Port Isabel Service Detention Center.
  
3. Respondent Bret Bradford, in his official capacity as Director of the Houston Field Office of ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations, has refused to effect Petitioner's release from unlawful custody at the Port Isabel Service Detention Center.
  
4. Respondent Kristi Noem, in her official capacity as Secretary of the United States Department of Homeland Security, has refused to exercise her authority to oversee her department's ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations and thereby effect Petitioner's release from unlawful custody at the Port Isabel Service Detention Center.
  
5. Respondent Pam Bondi, in her official capacity as Attorney General of the United States, has refused to exercise her authority to oversee her department's ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations and thereby effect Petitioner's release from unlawful custody at the Port Isabel Service Detention Center.

## **II. JURISDICTION & VENUE**

1. This Court has jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241 to issue writs of habeas corpus when the petitioner is in custody in violation of the Constitution or laws of the United States.
2. Venue is proper in this district because Petitioner is detained within this district.

## **III. EXHAUSTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES**

1. Petitioner has exhausted his administrative remedies to the extent required by law.
2. Petitioner has fully cooperated with Respondents and has not delayed or obstructed his detention.

3. Petitioner's only remedy is by way of this judicial action.

#### **IV. FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND**

1. Petitioner is a forty-three-year-old male native and citizen of Guatemala. *See attached, Exhibit A: Petitioner's Identification.* He first entered the United States on or about April 19, 2019 after fleeing Guatemala to escape threats and violence directed against him and his family. Petitioner fears that, if returned to Guatemala, he would face serious harm and substantial risk of persecution or torture on account of his membership in a particular social group.
2. On April 19, 2019, Petitioner entered the United States without inspection.
3. On November 18, 2025, Petitioner was detained by ICE officers and charged with being an alien present in the United States without being admitted or paroled.
4. Following his arrest, Petitioner was processed and held at the Port Isabel Service Detention Center, located at 27991 Buena Vista Blvd., Los Fresnos, Texas 78566..
5. Petitioner previously filed an asylum application. The immigration denied the application, ordering removal on January 10, 2023. An appeal to the Board of Immigration Appeals was timely filed on January 17, 2023, which remains pending. No final decision regarding removal has been made.
6. The government has not been able to articulate any meaningful reason why Petitioner should continue to remain in detention. Petitioner poses no threat to the community.
7. Petitioner, through Counsel, now submits the present Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus to this Honorable Court, and respectfully requests the Court to order Respondents to effect her immediate release.

**V. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR RELIEF SOUGHT**

1. Under U.S. Code 28 § 2241, writs of habeas corpus may be granted by the district courts on behalf of a prisoner in several instances, including when they are (1) “in custody under or by the authority of the United States or is committed for trial before some court thereof,” (3) “in custody in violation of the Constitution or laws and treaties of the United States,” and (4) when they, “being a citizen of a foreign state and domiciled therein [are] in custody for an act done or omitted under any alleged right, title, authority, privilege, protection, or exemption claimed under the commission, order or sanction of any foreign state, or under color thereof, the validity and effect of which depend upon the law of nations[.]”
2. Courts have consistently recognized “habeas corpus as an appropriate vehicle through which noncitizens may challenge the fact of their civil immigration detention.” *Vazquez Barrera v. Wolf*, 455 F. Supp. 3d 330, 336 (S.D. Tex. 2020) (citing *Zadvydas v. Davis* , 533 U.S. at 688 (ruling on merits of habeas petition challenging validity of indefinite mandatory detention)).

**VI. CLAIMS FOR RELIEF**

**COUNT ONE:**

RESPONDENTS HAVE UNLAWFULLY DETAINED PETITIONER  
IN VIOLATION OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION ACT.

1. Petitioner alleges and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 17 above.

2. Petitioner is currently in the appeal portion of his removal proceedings, but there has been no final order of removal issued against him. Respondents lack statutory authority to detain him while no removal order has been issued.
3. Petitioner poses no risk of danger to the community. In the six years since Petitioner came to the United States, he has never been charged with a crime, nor has he demonstrated any conduct whatsoever indicating that she is a threat to the United States or otherwise eligible for deportation.
4. Therefore, **Petitioner merits immediate release** because there has been no final order of removal issued against him, and the government cannot articulate any meaningful reason why he should continue to remain in detention despite the fact that no final order of removal exists against him.

### **COUNT TWO:**

#### RESPONDENTS HAVE UNLAWFULLY DETAINED PETITIONER IN VIOLATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL DUE PROCESS

1. Petitioner alleges and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 23 above.
2. Petitioner's continued detention violates her right to substantive and procedural due process guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
3. Petitioner is unlawfully in custody pursuant to INA § 241(a)(6), 8 U.S.C. § 1231(a)(6) (2018) ("Section 241"). Under *Zadvydas*, that provision prohibits the indefinite detention of noncitizens who (i) cannot be repatriated in the reasonably foreseeable future, and (ii) pose no threat to the community. Any such detention is unconstitutional. *See Zadvydas*, 533 U.S. at 689, emphasis added ("In our view, the statute [Section 241], read in light of

the Constitution's demands, limits an alien's post-removal-period detention to a period reasonably necessary to bring about that alien's removal from the United States. It does not permit indefinite detention.”).

4. The Fifth Amendment's Due Process Clause prohibits the government from detaining individuals without legal authority.
5. Under 8 U.S.C. § 1231(a)(1), detention during the removal period is only authorized after a removal order becomes "final."
6. Petitioner is in removal proceedings, but no final order of removal exists.
7. Furthermore, under *Zadvydas*, a non-citizen petitioner is not barred from seeking a writ of habeas corpus as relief for indefinite detention when there has been no final order issued. *See Zadvydas*, 533 U.S. at 688 (“The aliens here, however, do not seek review of the Attorney General's exercise of discretion; rather, they challenge the extent of the Attorney General's authority under the post-removal-period detention statute. And the extent of that authority is not a matter of discretion . . . [therefore we] conclude habeas corpus proceedings remain available. . . .”).
8. Therefore, this petition is not barred, as the Petitioner is not seeking to collaterally attack the final removal order, because there is no final order yet issued by the Court.
9. Petitioner's continued detention lacks statutory authority and violates his right to substantive due process under the Constitution. Therefore, he should be immediately released from custody.

## **VII. REQUEST FOR RELIEF**

WHEREFORE, Petitioner Martin Mejia Can respectfully requests that this Honorable Court **IMMEDIATELY** issue a temporary restraining order:

1. **Directing Respondents to immediately release Petitioner from custody;**
2. Restraining and enjoining Respondent, their agents, employees, and successors from removing Petitioner from the United States;
3. Directing Respondent to take all necessary steps to halt any removal preparations;
4. Requiring Respondent to notify all relevant personnel that Petitioner shall not be removed;
5. Set an expedited hearing on Petitioner's motion for preliminary injunction;
6. After hearing, issue a preliminary injunction maintaining the relief requested above during the pendency of this action;
7. Waive or set security in a nominal amount;
8. Award attorney's fees and costs; and
9. Grant such other relief as this Court deems just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

*/s/ Matthew R. Mendez*

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Attorney for Petitioner

**PETITIONER VERIFICATION**

Petitioner, is currently detained in ICE custody, and has authorized Counsel, Matthew Mendez, to verify, on her behalf, that the facts stated therein are true and correct to the best of his knowledge and belief.

/S/ Matthew Mendez  
Matthew Mendez  
Attorney for Petitioner

12/9/25  
Date

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

On December 9, 2025, Counsel for Plaintiff served a copy of the attached Petition via USPS Certified Mail, in compliance with Rule 4 of Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, upon the Respondent, Miguel Vergara, in his Official Capacity as Field Office Director, of ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations, Harlingen Field Office, at (1) Office of the Field Office Director, Enforcement and Removal Operations, Harlingen Field Office, 1717 Zoy Street.

/S/ Matthew Mendez  
Matthew Mendez  
Attorney for Petitioner

12/9/25  
Date

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

On December 9, 2025, Counsel for Plaintiff served a copy of the attached Petition via USPS Mail, in compliance with Rule 4 of Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, upon the **Respondent, Kristi Noem, in her Official Capacity as Director of U.S. Department of Homeland Security**, at (1) Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 245 Murray Lane, SW, Mail Stop 0485, Washington, D.C. 20530; and (2) to the United States at Civil Process Clerk, U.S. Attorney’s Office, 1000 Louisiana Street, Suite 2300, Houston, Texas 77002.

/S/ Matthew Mendez  
Matthew Mendez  
Attorney for Petitioner

12/9/25  
Date

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

On December 9, 2025, Counsel for Plaintiff served a copy of the attached Petition via email, in compliance with Rule 4 of Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, upon the Respondent, Pam Bondi, in her Official Capacity as Attorney General of the United States, at USATXS.CivilNotice@usdoj.gov.

/S/ Matthew Mendez  
Matthew Mendez  
Attorney for Petitioner

12/9/25  
Date