


**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

	:	
BALLA TOURE	:	PETITION FOR WRIT OF
Petitioner,	:	HABEAS CORPUS
v.	:	
	:	Case No.: 2:25-cv-7101
J.L. JAMISON, in his official capacity as Warden:	:	
of the Federal Detention Center, Philadelphia;	:	
BRIAN MCSHANE, in his official capacity as	:	
Acting Philadelphia Field Office Director,	:	
United States Immigration and Customs	:	
Enforcement; TODD LYONS, in his	:	
Official capacity as Acting Director of	:	
Immigration and Customs Enforcement;	:	
KRISTI NOEM, in her official capacity as	:	
Secretary of the Department of Homeland	:	
Security; THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF	:	
HOMELAND SECURITY; PAMELA BONDI,	:	
Attorney General of the United States	:	
	:	
Respondents.	:	

PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

BALLA TOURE, A  submits this petition for a Writ of Habeas Corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241 and the Suspension Clause (Article 1, Section 9, Clause 2) of the United States Constitution. Petitioner requests that this Court release him from detention by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) or, alternatively, conduct or order a bond hearing in which the

Respondents bear the burden of justifying Petitioner's continued detention. Petitioner also requests that the Court set aside recent policies implemented by Respondents that are contrary to the statutory right of non-citizens like Petitioner to seek release and bail through an exercise of the Respondents' discretion.

Mr. Toure is a native of Mauritania seeking asylum in the United States. Mr. Toure entered the United States on June 4, 2023, and timely submitted his application for asylum based on his fear of persecution in Mauritania.

On December 16, 2025, Mr. Toure attended a routine check-in at an ICE Office in Philadelphia, PA. ICE agents arrested Mr. Toure without a stated justification. Respondents arbitrarily detained Mr. Toure despite the requirement under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and its implementing regulations that immigration officials make an individualized custody determination. Moreover, Respondents have adopted policies enshrined in administrative decisions by the Board of Immigration Appeals ("BIA") that subject non-citizens like Mr. Toure to mandatory detention in violation of Section 1226(a).

Mr. Toure is presently detained at the Federal Detention Center in Philadelphia.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241 (habeas corpus); 28 U.S.C. § 1651 (All Writs Act); 28 U.S.C. § 1331 (federal question); 5 U.S.C. § 702 (Administrative Procedures Act); U.S. Const. amend. V (Due Process Clause); and U.S. Const. art. I, § 9, cl. 2 (Suspension Clause).

2. Venue is proper in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) and 28 U.S.C. § 2241(d), because at the time of filing his Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus (Doc. 1), Mr. Toure is imprisoned at the Federal Detention Center (“FDC”) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

PARTIES

3. Petitioner Balla Toure is a native of Mauritania seeking asylum in the United States. He is detained at the Federal Detention Center in Philadelphia, PA. Exh. A.

4. Respondent J.L. Jamison is named in his official capacity as the Warden of FDC, Philadelphia, which detains individuals suspected of civil immigration violations. Respondent Jamison is the immediate physical custodian responsible for the detention of Petitioner.

5. Respondent Brian McShane is the Acting Philadelphia Field Office Director for Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (“ICE”) Enforcement

and Removal Operations. In this capacity he is responsible for the custody of all noncitizens detained by ICE at FDC, Philadelphia and has the authority to release Mr. Toure or transfer him to a different facility. He is one of Mr. Toure's immediate custodians and is sued in his official capacity.

6. Respondent Todd Lyons is the Acting Director of ICE. In this capacity he is responsible for enforcing immigration laws, and as such is a legal custodian of Mr. Toure. He is sued in his official capacity.

7. Respondent Kristi Noem is Secretary of Homeland Security. In this capacity she runs the Department of Homeland Security, and is charged pursuant to 8 U.S.C. 1103(a)(1) with administering and enforcing immigration laws. She is the ultimate legal custodian of Mr. Toure, and is sued in her official capacity.

8. The Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") is the agency of the federal government responsible for enforcing the immigration laws. DHS is also Mr. Toure's legal custodian.

9. Respondent Pamela Bondi is the Attorney General of the United States and the head of the U.S. Department of Justice, which encompasses the Board of Immigration Appeals ("BIA") and immigration courts, known collectively as the

Executive Office of Immigration Review (“EOIR”). Ms. Bondi shares responsibility for the implementation and enforcement of immigration laws along with Respondent Noem. Ms. Bondi is a legal custodian of Mr. Toure. She is sued in her official capacity.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

10. For non-citizens attempting to enter the United States, the INA provides under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) that “in the case of [a non-citizen] who is an applicant from admission, if the examining immigration officer determines that an alien seeking admission is not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted, the alien shall be detained.” “A noncitizen detained under Section 1225(b)(2) may be released only if he is paroled ‘for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit’ pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1182(d)(5)(A).” *Gomes v. Hyde*, 25 Civ. 11571, 2025 WL 1868288, at *2 (D. Mass. July 7, 2025) (quoting *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 300 (2018)).

11. In contrast, the Supreme Court has found that “U.S. immigration law authorizes the Government to detain certain [non-citizens] *already in the country* pending the outcome of removal proceedings under §§ 1226(a) and (c).” *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 288-89.

12. Section 236 of the INA provides in relevant part as follows:

(a) Arrest, Detention, and Release. On a warrant issued by the Attorney General, *an alien may be arrested and detained pending a decision on whether the alien is to be removed from the United States*. Except as provided in subsection (c) and pending such decision, *the Attorney General—*

(1) *may continue to detain the arrested alien; and*

(2) *may release the alien on—*

(A) *bond of at least \$1,500 with security approved by, and containing conditions prescribed by, the Attorney General; or*

(B) *conditional parole ...*

13. The Supreme Court has interpreted similar “may” language in other provisions of the INA to require “some level of individualized determination.” *I.N.S. v. Nat’l Ctr. for Immigrants’ Rights*, 502 U.S. 183, 194 (1991). The regulation implementing Respondents’ authority to arrest non-citizens present in the United States reads:

“Any officer authorized to issue a warrant of arrest may, in the officer’s discretion, release an alien not described in [8 U.S.C. § 1236(c)(1)] of the Act, under the conditions at section [8 U.S.C. § 1236(a)(2) and (3)]; provided that the alien must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the officer that such release would not pose a danger to property or persons, and that the alien is likely to appear for any future proceeding.”

8 U.S.C. § 1236.1(c)(8).

14. Noncitizens may request a review of an initial custody determination before an Immigration Judge (“IJ”). 8 C.F.R. § 1236.1(d)(1); 8 C.F.R. § 1002.19(a). At this hearing an IJ may make the decision “upon any information

that is available to the [Immigration Judge] or that is presented to him or her by the [non-citizen] or the [government].” 8 C.F.R. § 1003.19(d); *see also Matter of Guerra*, 24 I&N Dec. 37, 39 (BIA 2006). Non-citizens may appeal a negative decision in a custody review before an IJ to the Board of Immigration Appeals. 8 C.F.R. § 1236.1(d)(3)(i). The current statutory scheme was created through the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (“IIRIRA”).

15. For the first time in nearly three decades, Respondents have taken the position through a series of precedential decisions by the Board of Immigration Appeals that non-citizens residing in the interior of the United States are not entitled to a custody redetermination (a “bond hearing”) before an Immigration Judge.

16. First, in *Matter of Q. Li*, 29 I&N Dec. 66 (BIA 2025), the BIA held that a non-citizen who had been apprehended at the border and subsequently released into the United States is subject to mandatory detention without a possibility of bail upon re-detention, pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b), even if that re-detention occurs years after their initial release from custody. The BIA reasoned that “an applicant for admission who is arrested and detained without a warrant while in the process of arriving in the United States, whether or not at a port of entry, and subsequently placed in removal proceedings is detained under section [1225(b)] [],

and is ineligible for any subsequent release on bond under section [1226(a)].” *Q. Li*, 29 I&N Dec. at 74.

17. Then in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025), the BIA stated that all non-citizens who are present in the United States without admission are subject to mandatory detention under Section 1225(b), regardless of how long they have been residing in the U.S. and absent any prior interaction with immigration authorities.

FACTS AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

18. Mr. Toure is a native of Mauritania. He was an active anti-slavery protester in Mauritania against the regime of Mohamed Ould Ghazouani. In retribution, the regime arrested and persecuted Mr. Toure.

19. On June 4, 2023, Mr. Toure entered the United States via Lukeville, AZ. Officials from Customs and Border Patrol (“CBP”), a sub-agency of DHS, detained Mr. Toure upon entry.

20. After a brief period of detention Mr. Toure was released on his own recognizance into the United States. He was subsequently issued a Notice to Appear charging him as removable from the United States pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(6)(A)(i) (“A [non-citizen] present in the United States without being admitted or paroled, or who arrives in the United

States at any time or place other than as designated by the Attorney General, is inadmissible”). Exh. B. The Notice to Appear ordered that he appear at the Philadelphia Immigration Court for an initial hearing on September 12, 2024, at 1300h.

21. Mr. Toure settled in Philadelphia, PA where there is a large Soninke community. Mr. Toure has worked lawfully paying taxes in order to support himself and his family.

22. Mr. Toure submitted an application for Asylum with the immigration court.

23. On multiple occasions prior to his arrest, Mr. Toure reported to the ICE office in Philadelphia, PA for a check-in without incident. Mr. Toure had been reporting quarterly since entering the USA in 2023.

24. On December 16, 2025, Mr. Toure attended a check-in at the ICE office in Philadelphia, PA. Without prior warning, an ICE official took Mr. Toure into custody. Mr. Toure was transported to FDC, Philadelphia. He remains detained there.

CLAIM FOR RELIEF

COUNT ONE

VIOLATION OF DUE PROCESS, U.S. CONST. AMEND. V

25. Petitioner repeats and incorporates by reference each and every allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

26. The Fifth Amendment's Due Process Clause prevents the Government from depriving any person of "life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." U.S. Const. amend. V.

27. The Due Process Clause extends to noncitizens residing in the United States, whether they have lawful status or not. *See Mathews v. Diaz*, 426 U.S. 67, 77 (1976); *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 693 (2001). Specifically, "[i]t is well established that the Fifth Amendment entitles [non-citizens] to due process of law in deportation proceedings. *Reno v. Flores*, 507 U.S. 292, 306 (1993); *see also Abdulai v. Ashcroft*, 239 F.3d 542, 549 (3d Cir. 2001) ("[Non-citizens] facing removal are entitled to due process"); *Calderon-Rosas v. Atty' Gen.*, 957 F.3d 378, 386 (3d Cir. 2020) ("In sum, petitioners seeking discretionary relief are entitled to fundamentally fair removal proceedings, which constitutes a protected interest supporting a due process claim.").

28. Evaluating the adequacy of the process provided to a non-citizen requires a balancing of factors. "First, the private interest that will be affected by the official action; second, the risk of an erroneous deprivation of such interest

through the procedures used, and the probable value, if any, of additional or substitute procedural safeguards; and finally, the Government's interest, including the function involved and the fiscal and administrative burdens that the additional or substitute procedural requirement would entail.” *Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319, 335 (1976).

29. First, Mr. Toure faces “the most significant liberty interest there is—the interest in being free from imprisonment.” *Velasco Lopez v. Decker*, 978 F.3d 842, 851 (2d Cir. 2020) (citing *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*, 542 U.S. 507, 529 (2004)). Second, Respondents have erroneously deprived Mr. Toure of his liberty without any individualized assessment of his circumstances. Third, Respondents did not make any individualized finding that Mr. Toure was a danger or flight risk, so there does not appear to be a significant government interest in detaining Mr. Toure.

30. An application of these factors requires that Mr. Toure should have been provided with additional process before being detained.

COUNT TWO

VIOLATION OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT, 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a)

31. Petitioner repeats and incorporates by reference each and every

allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

32. The mandatory detention provision at 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) does not apply to all noncitizens residing in the United States who are subject to grounds of inadmissibility. As relevant here, it does not apply to those who have been residing in the United States at liberty after being briefly detained at or near the border. Such noncitizens, if detained, are done so under § 1226(a), and are generally eligible for release on bond.

33. Respondents' authority to detain Mr. Toure is derived from 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) as Mr. Toure is already present in the United States.

34. Respondents have detained Mr. Toure without making an individualized determination regarding whether he posed a danger or flight risk as required by 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and its regulations.

35. Moreover, Respondents' current policies as set forth in the BIA's decisions in *Matter of Q. Li* and *Matter of Yajure Hurtado* unlawfully prevent Mr. Toure from obtaining a custody redetermination in front of an Immigration Judge as is his right by statute.

COUNT THREE

VIOLATION OF THE BOND REGULATIONS, 8 C.F.R. § 236.1, 1236.1 and 1003.19

36. Petitioner repeats and incorporates by reference each and every allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

37. In 1997, after Congress amended the INA through IIRIRA, EOIR the then-Immigration and Naturalization Service issued an interim rule to interpret and apply IIRIRA. Specifically, under the heading of “Apprehension, Custody, and Detention of [Non-citizens],” the agencies explained that “[d]espite being applicants for admission, [noncitizens] who are present without having been admitted or paroled (formerly referred to as [noncitizens] who entered without inspection) *will be eligible for bond and bond redetermination.*” 62 Fed. Reg. at 10323 (emphasis added). Thus, the agencies made clear that non-citizens present in the United States would be eligible for consideration for bond and bond hearings before IJs under 8 U.S.C. § 1226 and its implementing regulations.

38. Yet, Respondents have adopted a policy and practice of applying § 1225(b)(2) to non-citizens like Mr. Toure who are present in the United States without being admitted or paroled.

39. The application of § 1225(b)(2) to Mr. Toure unlawfully mandates his continued detention in violation of 8 C.F.R. §§ 236.1,

1236.1, and 1003.19.

COUNT FOUR

VIOLATION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE ACT (“APA”), 5 U.S.C. § 701, et. seq.

40. Petitioner repeats and incorporates by reference each and every allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

41. Mr. Toure is aggrieved by agency action under the Administrative Procedure Act, 5 U.S.C. §§ 701 *et. seq.* Specifically, Respondents have acted arbitrarily in detaining Mr. Toure without conducting an individualized determination into his circumstances. In other words, Respondents have not presented any indication that Mr. Toure’s circumstances have changed such that he is now a danger or flight risk in a way that he was not when he was released from detention at the border in 2023.

42. Additionally, Respondents’ recent policies announced through administrative decisions issued by the BIA unlawfully withhold the right to a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) to Mr. Toure.

43. These policies are arbitrary, capricious, and not in accordance with the text of the INA.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Petitioner prays that this Court grant the following relief:

Issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus ordering Respondents to release Petitioner from custody immediately on his own recognizance or under parole, bond or reasonable conditions of supervision, on the ground that his continued detention by the Department of Homeland Security violates his Due Process rights;

Set aside Respondents' unlawful detention policy held in *Matter of Q. Li* and *Matter of Yajure Hurtado* as applied under the APA, 5 U.S.C. § 706(2), as contrary to law, arbitrary and capricious, and contrary to constitutional right;

Issue a writ requiring an immediate, constitutionally adequate hearing before an Immigration Judge, at which: (i) DHS bears the burden to demonstrate, by clear and convincing evidence, that Petitioner's continued detention is necessary, and (ii) the immigration judge considers Petitioner's ability to pay a bond.

While this petition is pending, order Petitioner's immediate release pursuant to the Court's inherent authority to release habeas corpus petitioners on bail;

Enter a judgment declaring that Respondents' detention of Petitioner is unauthorized by statute and contrary to law and the U.S. Constitution;

Award Petitioner reasonable costs and attorneys' fees;

Grant any further relief that this Court may deem fit and proper.

Dated: December 17, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

s/Towanda Smith, Esq.

Towanda Smith (PA Bar 332836)

Smith Pro Law LLC

614 Darby Rd.

Havertown, PA 19083

p. (610)679-4104

tsmith@smithprolaw.com

ATTORNEY

FOR PETITIONER

**VERIFICATION BY SOMEONE ACTING ON PETITIONER'S
BEHALF PURSUANT TO 28 U.S.C. § 2242**

I, Towanda Smith, Esq., declare under penalty of perjury pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746 that I am submitting this verification on behalf of Mr. Toure because he is currently detained at the Federal Detention Center, Philadelphia, and is unable to execute this verification in a timely manner. As Mr. Toure's attorney, I hereby verify that the factual statements made in the attached Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

Dated: December 17, 2025

By: s/Towanda Smith, Esq.

Towanda Smith (PA Bar 332836)
Smith Pro Law LLC
614 Darby Rd.
Havertown, PA 19083
p. (610)679-4104
tsmith@smithprolaw.com
ATTORNEY FOR PETITIONER

LIST OF EXHIBITS

Exh. A. Bureau of Prisons website and ICE website printouts indicating that Petitioner is detained at FDC, Philadelphia

Exh. B. Notice to Appear

Exh. C. Asylum application