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8 *Attorney for Petitioner-Plaintiff*

9 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
10 FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEVADA

11 Christian E. ORDONEZ RUGAMA

12 Petitioner-Plaintiff,

13 v.

14 Kristi NOEM, in her Official Capacity, Secretary,
15 U.S. Department of Homeland Security;

16 Pam BONDI, in her Official Capacity, Attorney
17 General of the United States;

18 Todd M. LYONS, Acting Director, Immigration and
19 Customs Enforcement, U.S. Department of Homeland
20 Security;

21 Jason KNIGHT, Salt Lake City Field Office Director
22 for Detention and Removal, U.S. Immigration and
23 Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland
24 Security; and

25 Darin BALAAM, Sherriff, Washoe County Detention
26 Center.

27 Respondents-Defendants.
28

Agency No.



**PETITION FOR WRIT OF
HABEAS CORPUS**

Challenge to Unlawful
Incarceration Under Color of
Immigration Detention Statutes.

1 **INTRODUCTION**

2 1. Petitioner, Christian E. Ordonez Rugama, brings this petition for a writ of habeas corpus
3 to seek enforcement of his rights a member of the Bond Denial Class certified in *Maldonado*
4 *Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-CV-01873-SSS-BFM (C.D. Cal.). Petitioner is in the physical
5 custody of Respondents at the Washoe County Jail. He now faces unlawful detention because the
6 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Executive Office for Immigration Review
7 (EOIR) have refused to abide by the declaratory judgment issued on behalf of the certified class
8 in *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*.

9 2. On November 20, 2025, the district court granted partial summary judgment on
10 behalf of individual plaintiffs and on November 25, 2025, certified a nationwide class and
11 extended declaratory judgment to the certified class. *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-
12 CV-01873-SSS-BFM, --- F. Supp. 3d ----, 2025 WL 3289861, at *11 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 20, 2025)
13 (order granting partial summary judgment to named Plaintiffs-Petitioners); *Maldonado Bautista*
14 *v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-CV-01873-SSS-BFM, --- F. Supp. 3d ----, 2025 WL 3288403, at *9 (C.D.
15 Cal. Nov. 25, 2025) (order certifying Plaintiffs-Petitioners' proposed nationwide Bond Eligible
16 Class, incorporating and extending declaratory judgment from Order Granting Petitioners'
17 Motion for Partial Summary Judgment).

18 3. The declaratory judgment held that the Bond Denial Class members are detained under 8
19 U.S.C. § 1226(a), and thus may not be denied consideration for release on bond under §
20 1225(b)(2)(A). *Maldonado Bautista*, 2025 WL 3289861, at *11.

21 4. Nonetheless, the Executive Office for Immigration Review and its subagency the
22 Immigration Court and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have blatantly refused to
23 abide by the declaratory relief and have unlawfully ordered that Petitioner be denied the
24 opportunity to be released on bond.

25 5. Petitioner, Christian E. Ordonez Rugama, is a member of the Bond Eligible Class, as he:
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- 1 a. Does not have lawful status in the United States and is currently detained at the
2 Washoe County Jail. He was apprehended by immigration authorities on
3 November 14, 2025;
- 4 b. He entered the United States without inspection over 2 years ago, on or around
5 2021 and was not apprehended upon arrival¹, *cf. id.*; and
- 6 c. is not detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c), § 1225(b)(1), or § 1231.

7 6. After apprehending Petitioner on November 14, 2025, the DHS placed him in removal
8 proceedings pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1229(a). DHS has charged Petitioner as being inadmissible
9 under 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(6)(A)(i), as someone who entered the United States without inspection
10 and under INA § 212(a)(7)(A)(i)(I).

11 7. The Court should expeditiously grant this petition.

12 8. Respondents are bound by the judgment in *Maldonado Bautista*, as it has the full
13 “force and effect of a final judgment.” 28 U.S.C. § 2201(a). Nevertheless, Respondents continue
14 to flagrantly defy the judgment in that case and continue to subject Petitioner to unlawful
15 detention despite his clear entitlement to consideration for release on bond as a Bond Eligible
16 Class member.

17 9. Immigration judges have informed class members in bond hearings that they have
18 No jurisdiction. Further, that the declaratory judgment in *Maldonado Bautista* is not controlling,
19 even with respect to class members, and that instead Immigration Judges remain bound to follow
20 the agency’s prior decision in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025).

21 10. Because Respondents are detaining Petitioner in violation of the declaratory judgment
22 issued in *Maldonado Bautista*, the Court should accordingly order that within one day,
23 Respondent DHS must release Petitioner.

24 11. Alternatively, the Court should order Petitioner’s release unless Respondents provide a

25 ¹ Although Mr. Ordonez Rugama was apprehended during his first attempt to enter the United
26 States, that attempt was not successful and therefore did not constitute an entry. This makes his
27 situation distinguishable from *Matter of Q. Li* 29 I&N Dec. 66 (BIA 2025) where the Respondent
28 there was allowed entry into the United States following his detention. Therefore in Mr. Ordonez
Rugama’s case, he was not apprehended upon his arrival.

1 bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within seven days.

2 **CUSTODY**

3 12. Mr. Ordonez Rugama is currently in custody of ICE at the Washoe County Detention
4 Center in Reno, Nevada. Mr. Ordonez Rugama is therefore in “‘custody’ of [the DHS] within the
5 meaning of the habeas corpus statute.” *Jones v. Cunningham*, 371 U.S. 236, 243 (1963).

6 **JURISDICTION**

7 13. This action arises under the Constitution of the United States and the Immigration and
8 Nationality Act (INA), 8 U.S.C. § 1101 et seq.

9 14. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241
10 (habeas corpus), 28 U.S.C. § 1331 (federal question jurisdiction), 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201 *et seq.*
11 (Declaratory Judgment Act), the All Writs Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1651, Article I, Section 9, Clause 2
12 of the U.S. Constitution (the Suspension Clause), Article III of the U.S. Constitution, and under
13 the common law.

14 **REQUIREMENTS OF 28 U.S.C. § 2243**

15 15. The Court must grant the petition for writ of habeas corpus or issue an order to show
16 cause (OSC) to Respondents “‘forthwith,” unless the petitioner is not entitled to relief. 28 U.S.C.
17 § 2243. If an order to show cause is issued, the Court must require Respondents to file a return
18 “‘within *three days* unless for good cause additional time, *not exceeding twenty days*, is allowed.”
19 *Id.* (emphasis added).

20 16. Courts have long recognized the significance of the habeas statute in protecting
21 individuals from unlawful detention. The Great Writ has been referred to as “‘perhaps the most
22 important writ known to the constitutional law of England, affording as it does a *swift* and
23 imperative remedy in all cases of illegal restraint or confinement.” *Fay v. Noia*, 372 U.S. 391,
24 400 (1963) (emphasis added).

25 17. Habeas corpus must remain a swift remedy. Importantly, “‘the statute itself directs
26 courts to give petitions for habeas corpus ‘special, preferential consideration to insure expeditious
27 hearing and determination.’” *Yong v. INS*, 208 F.3d 1116, 1120 (9th Cir. 2000) (internal citations
28

1 omitted). The Ninth Circuit warned against any action creating the perception “that courts are
2 more concerned with efficient trial management than with the vindication of constitutional
3 rights.” *Id.*

4 VENUE

5 18. Venue is proper in this Court under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e) because the Respondents are
6 officers or employees of the United States acting in their official capacities.

7 19. Mr. Ordonez Rugama is currently under the supervision of the ERO Salt Lake City –
8 Reno Sub Office, which falls within the jurisdiction of this District. This action does not involve
9 any real property.

10 EXHAUSTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

11
12 20. In the context of habeas corpus claims, exhaustion of administrative remedies is a
13 *prudential* requirement rather than a *jurisdictional* one, as it is not explicitly required by statute.
14 *Hernandez v. Sessions*, 872 F.3d 976, 988 (9th Cir. 2017). Courts have discretion to waive
15 prudential exhaustion where administrative remedies are inadequate or ineffective, when
16 pursuing them would be futile, when irreparable harm would result, or where the administrative
17 process would be void. *Id.* (citing *Laing v. Ashcroft*, 370 F.3d 994, 1000 (9th Cir. 2004)). The
18 burden is on the party seeking waiver of prudential exhaustion to demonstrate that at least one of
19 the *Laing* factors applies. *Aden v. Nielsen*, 2019 WL 5802013, at 2 (W.D. Wash. Nov. 7, 2019).
20

21 21. In this case, any appeal to the Board is futile in light of *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29
22 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025).” The Ninth Circuit has made clear that exhaustion is not required
23 where administrative recourse would be futile—such as when the agency’s position on the
24 relevant issue is already established and the outcome of the appeal is certain. *El Rescate Legal*
25 *Servs., Inc. v. Exec. Off. of Imm. Rev.*, 959 F.2d 742, 747 (9th Cir. 1992).
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1 22. The *Matter of Yajure Hurtado* was issued as a precedential decision by the BIA. Under 8
2 C.F.R. § 1003.1(g)(1), such decisions are binding in all cases involving the same issue(s); *see*
3 also 8 C.F.R. § 1003.1(d)(1)(i). Because the BIA has already exercised its expertise and reached
4 a conclusive determination in *Yajure Hurtado*, further exhaustion is unnecessary. The decision
5 establishes that individuals found inadmissible under 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(6)(A)(i)—that is, those
6 present in the U.S. without being admitted or paroled—are subject to mandatory detention
7 without bond under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) upon BIA review.

9 23. BIA decisions are binding on immigration judges, and *Hurtado* thus precludes an
10 Immigration Judge from finding jurisdiction over noncitizens like Mr. Ordonez Rugama to hold
11 a custody redetermination hearing. Therefore, judicial intervention enjoining Respondents from
12 preventing Mr. Ordonez Rugama from having a bond hearing pursuant to the holding in *Hurtado*
13 is necessary to enable him to avail himself of his administrative remedies.

15 24. Therefore, Mr. Ordonez Rugama respectfully requests that the Court waive the prudential
16 exhaustion requirement on grounds of futility. As established in *Aden*, 2019 WL 5802013, at 2,
17 satisfying just one of the *Laing* factors is sufficient; therefore, analysis of the remaining factors is
18 unnecessary.

20 PARTIES

21 25. Mr. Ordonez Rugama is a citizen and national of Nicaragua who last entered the United
22 States in the year 2021 and has continuously resided in the country since that time. He is a resident
23 of Carson City, Nevada, and is currently detained and under the direct custody and control of
24 Respondents and their agents.

26 26. Respondent Darin Balaam is the Sherriff of the Washoe County Detention Center,

1 where Petitioner is currently held. He has immediate physical custody of Petitioner pursuant to
2 the facility's contract with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to detain noncitizens and,
3 as such, serves as one of Petitioner's legal custodians.

4 27. Respondent Jason KNIGHT is sued in his official capacity as the Acting Director of the
5 Salt Lake City Field Office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Respondent
6 KNIGHT is a legal custodian of Petition and has authority to release him.

7 28. Respondent Todd M. LYONS is the Acting Director of ICE and is named in his official
8 capacity. Among other things, ICE is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the
9 immigration laws, including the removal of noncitizens. In his official capacity as head of ICE,
10 he is the legal custodian of Mr. Ordonez Rugama.

11 29. Respondent Kristi NOEM is the Secretary of DHS and is named in her official capacity.
12 DHS is the federal agency encompassing ICE, which is responsible for the administration and
13 enforcement of the INA and all other laws relating to the immigration of noncitizens. In her
14 capacity as Secretary, Respondent Noem has responsibility for the administration and
15 enforcement of the immigration and naturalization laws pursuant to section 402 of the Homeland
16 Security Act of 2002, 107 Pub. L. No. 296, 116 Stat. 2135 (Nov. 25, 2002); *see also* 8 U.S.C. §
17 1103(a). Respondent Noem is the ultimate legal custodian of Mr. Ordonez Rugama.

18 30. Respondent Pam BONDI is the Attorney General of the United States and the most senior
19 official in the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and is named in her official capacity. She has the
20 authority to interpret immigration laws and adjudicate removal cases. The Attorney General
21 delegates this responsibility to the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), which
22 administers the immigration courts and the BIA.

23 **STATEMENT OF FACTS**

24
25 Mr. Ordonez Rugama is a 30-year-old native and citizen of Nicaragua who entered the
26 United States on or around the year 2021. Since that time, he has remained in the country
27 without interruption and has continuously resided in the Carson City, Nevada area.

1 He is married to Jacqueline Guitron Perez, a United States citizen. He has a clear pathway to
2 resolve his immigration status because his wife filed Form I-130 with USCIS, thereby initiating
3 the family-based immigration petition. USCIS approved the petition on April 25, 2024, and the
4 Petitioner was in the process of preparing the second step of the application, which involves
5 filing Form I-601A.

6
7 Mr. Ordoñez Rugama came to the attention of Immigration and Customs Enforcement
8 (“ICE”) on November 14, 2025, after he was arrested on November 13, 2025, and charged with
9 domestic battery. He was booked into the county jail and subsequently appeared before the
10 criminal court, which ordered his release on his own recognizance (“OR”) that same day.

11
12 On November 14, 2025, the day after his OR release, ICE assumed custody of Mr.
13 Ordoñez Rugama. He remains in ICE custody and is currently detained at the Washoe County
14 Jail.

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16 On November 14, 2025, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) initiated removal
17 proceedings against Mr. Ordonez Rugama by filing a Notice to Appear (NTA), charging him as
18 removable pursuant to INA § 212(a)(6)(A) for being present in the United States without
19 admission or parole. He was additionally charged as removable pursuant to INA § (a)(7)(A)(i)(I).

20 The NTA stated:

- 21
22 1. You are not a citizen or national of the United States;
23 2. You are a native of Nicaragua and a citizen of Nicaragua;
24 3. You entered the United States at or near UNKNOWN, on or about unknown date;
25 4. You were not then admitted or paroled after inspection by an Immigration Officer.

1 5. You are an immigrant not in possession of a valid unexpired immigrant visa, reentry
2 permit, border crossing card, or other valid entry document required by the
3 Immigration and Nationality Act; and/or

4 6. You are an immigrant not in possession of a valid unexpired passport, or other suitable
5 travel document, or document of identity and nationality.

6 The NTA further charged him as being an alien present in the United States who has not
7 been admitted or paroled.

8 After detaining Mr. Ordonez Rugama, ICE did not initially set a bond. On December 11,
9 2025, Mr. Ordonez Rugama filed a request for a bond redetermination hearing before the
10 Immigration Court in Las Vegas, Nevada. In support of his request, he submitted evidence
11 demonstrating that he did not pose a danger to the community or a flight risk.

12 A bond hearing was conducted on December 15, 2025, before Immigration Judge Daniel
13 J. Daugherty. At that time, the Department asserted that Mr. Ordonez Rugama was subject to
14 mandatory detention pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b), thereby precluding the Court from exercising
15 bond jurisdiction. The Petitioner argued that he was a class member of *Maldonado Bautista*. The
16 Immigration Judge ultimately ruled that the decision in *Maldonado Bautista* was not final and
17 that he did not have jurisdiction to decide on a bond pursuant to *Matter of Hurtado*.

18 Mr. Ordonez Rugama's continued detention has resulted in substantial hardship to his
19 close family members who depend on him. His United States citizen spouse is experiencing
20 emotional distress due to the prolonged separation from the Petitioner. His detention has also
21 interfered with his ability to effectively participate in his removal proceedings, limiting his access
22 to legal counsel, documents, witnesses, and other necessary evidence. Mr. Ordonez Rugama has
23 experienced mental and emotional distress as a result of his separation from his family,
24 particularly knowing the difficulties they are facing during his absence.

CLAIM FOR RELIEF

Violation of the INA:

Request for Relief Pursuant to *Maldonado Bautista*

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3 1. Petitioner repeats, re-alleges, and incorporates by reference each and every
4 allegation in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

5 2. As a member of the Bond Eligible Class, Petitioner is entitled to consideration for
6 release on bond under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a).

7 3. The order granting partial summary judgment in *Maldonado Bautista* holds that
8 Respondents violate the INA in applying the mandatory detention statute at § 1225(b)(2) to class
9 members.

10 4. The order granting class certification in *Maldonado Bautista* further orders that
11 “[w]hen considering this determination with the MSJ Order, the Court extends the same
12 declaratory relief granted to Petitioners to the Bond Eligible Class as a whole.”

13 5. Respondents are parties to *Maldonado Bautista* and bound by the Court’s
14 declaratory judgment, which has the full “force and effect of a final judgment.” 28 U.S.C.
15 § 2201(a).

16 6. By denying Petitioner a bond hearing under § 1226(a) and asserting that Mr.
17 Ordonez Rugama is subject to mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2), Respondents violate
18 Petitioner’s statutory rights under the INA and the Court’s judgment in *Maldonado Bautista*.

19
20 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

21
22 WHEREFORE, Petitioner prays that this Court grant the following relief:

- 23 a. Assume jurisdiction over this matter;
- 24 b. Issue a writ of habeas corpus requiring that within one day, Respondents release
25 Petitioner;
- 26 c. Alternatively, issue a writ of habeas corpus requiring Respondents to release
27

1 Petitioner unless they provide a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within seven days;

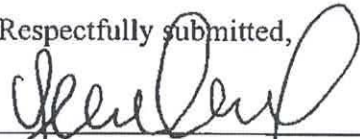
2 d. Award Petitioner attorney's fees and costs under the Equal Access to Justice Act
3 (EAJA), as amended, 28 U.S.C. § 2412, and on any other basis justified under law;

4 e. Order that Respondents shall not transfer Petitioner out of the District of Nevada
5 pending resolution on the merits; and
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7 f. Grant any other and further relief that this Court deems just and proper.

8 Dated this 17th day of December 2025

Respectfully submitted,

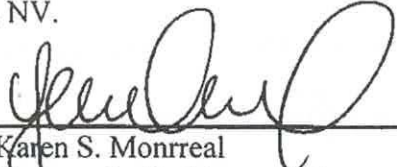


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10 Karen S. Monrreal, Esq.
11 Attorney for Mr. Ordonez Rugama
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VERIFICATION PURSUANT TO 28 U.S.C. 2242

I am submitting this verification on behalf of the Petitioner because I am one of
Petitioner's attorneys. I have discussed with the Petitioner the events described in the Petition.
Based on those discussions, 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.

Executed on this 17th day of December 2025 in Reno, NV.



Karen S. Monrreal
Attorney for Petitioner Ordonez
Rugama

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