

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
WAYCROSS DIVISION

SANTANA ROJAS, Jorge Andres)
Petitioner,)
v.)
Michael BRECKON, *in his*)
official capacity as Warden of Folkston ICE)
Processing Center, D. Ray James)
Correctional Facility and Todd LYONS,)
in his official capacity as Acting)
Director of Immigration and Customs)
Enforcement, and Ladeon)
FRANCIS, *Field Office Director ICE*)
Atlanta Field Office, and Kristi NOEM,)
Secretary of Homeland Security, Pamela)
BONDI, *in her official capacity as Attorney*)
General, United States Department of)
Justice)
Respondents.

Case No. _____

**PETITION FOR
WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS**

Alien File No. 

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Petitioner, Mr. Santana Rojas is a 19-year-old native and citizen of Ecuador who entered the United States without inspection on or about December 10, 2024, and has resided in the country for the past 2 years.
2. Respondent was detained on or about January 14, 2026, by the Department of Homeland Security.
3. Petitioner now seeks a writ of habeas corpus directing the Respondents to provide Petitioner with a bond hearing to determine if he may be released on bond under § 1226(a)(2) and the applicable regulations. See 8 C.F.R. §§ 236.1 & 1236.1.

II. VENUE AND JURISDICTION

4. This Court has jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 2241, 28 U.S.C. § 1331, and Article I, § 9, cl. 2 of the Constitution (Suspension Clause).
5. Venue lies in this Division because Petitioner is detained at Folkston ICE Processing Center, within the Waycross Division, and Respondent Breckon is his immediate custodian. See 28 U.S.C. §§ 2241(d), 1391(e).

III. PARTIES

6. Petitioner Mr. Santana Rojas is a 19-year-old Ecuadorian national who resides in Charlotte, North Carolina. He is currently detained at the Folkston ICE Processing Center.
7. Respondent Michael Breckon is the Warden of Folkston ICE Processing Center. As such, Respondent Breckon is responsible for the operation of the Detention Center where Petitioner is detained. Because ICE contracts with private prisons such as Folkston Processing ICE Center to house immigration detainees such as Mr. Santana Rojas. Respondent Breckon has immediate physical custody of the Petitioner.
8. Respondent Todd Lyons is the Acting Director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (hereinafter "ICE"). As such, Respondent Lyons is being sued in his official capacity.
9. Respondent Ladeon Francis is the Atlanta Field Office Director for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (hereinafter "FOD"). As such, Respondent Francis is responsible for the oversight of ICE operations at the Folkston ICE Processing Center. Respondent Francis is being sued in his official capacity.
10. Respondent Kristi Noem is the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (hereinafter "DHS").

As Secretary of DHS, Secretary Noem is responsible for the general administration and enforcement of the immigration laws of the United States. Respondent Noem is being sued in her official capacity.

11. Respondent Pamela Bondi is the Attorney General of the United States. She is responsible for the Department of Justice, of which the Executive Office for Immigration Review and the immigration court system it operates is a component agency. She is sued in her official capacity.

IV. EXHAUSTION OF REMEDIES

12. Petitioner has exhausted his administrative remedies to the extent required by law, and his only remedy is by way of this judicial action.

V. STATEMENT OF FACTS

13. Petitioner, Mr. Santana Rojas, is a native and citizen of Ecuador who entered the United States without inspection on or about December 10, 2024, and promptly presented himself to immigration authorities. Upon entry, Petitioner was issued an expedited removal order. Following a credible fear interview, an asylum officer determined that Petitioner demonstrated a credible fear of persecution or torture, and the expedited removal order was vacated. Petitioner was later released from custody. Since his release, Petitioner has complied with all immigration requirements and has continuously resided in the United States for the past two years. See **Exhibit 1**, *Copy of Petitioner's Ecuadorian Passport and Notice to Appear*.

14. On or about January 14, 2026, Petitioner voluntarily presented himself at an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facility in compliance with his reporting requirements. Petitioner had attempted to report on January 13, 2026, but was unable to enter the facility

and therefore, returned the following day. Upon presenting himself on January 14, 2026, Petitioner was taken into ICE custody and detained.

15. Petitioner has a pending Form I-589, Application for Asylum and Withholding of Removal case with the Immigration Court. Based on this filing, Petitioner was issued an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) allowing him to lawfully work and contribute to the community while his case is adjudicated. See **Exhibit 2**, *Copy of Petitioner's I-589 USCIS Receipt Notice*.
16. On September 5, 2025, the Board of Immigration Appeals (“BIA”) issued a decision which proposes that, “[b]ased on the plain language of section 235(b)(2)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) (2018), Immigration Judges lack authority to hear bond requests or to grant bond to aliens who are present in the United States without admission.” See *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025).
17. As of January 14, 2026, Petitioner has been detained for 13 days and denied the opportunity to request bond before an Immigration Judge.
18. Petitioner’s continued detention is causing irreparable harm, as he has been separated from his family and continues to suffer trauma as a result of this unlawful restraint on his liberty.

VI. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

19. The INA prescribes three basic forms of detention for most noncitizens in removal proceedings.
20. First, 8 U.S.C. § 1226 authorizes the detention of noncitizens in standard removal proceedings before an Immigration Judge. See 8 U.S.C. § 1229a. This provision applies to “applicants for admission,” defined as those “present in the United States who has not been admitted.” § 1225(a)(1). Individuals in §1226(a) detention are generally entitled to a bond

hearing at the outset of their detention, *see* 8 C.F.R. §§ 1003.19(a), 1236.1(d), while noncitizens who have been arrested, charged with, or convicted of certain crimes are subject to mandatory detention until their removal proceedings are concluded, *see* 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c).

21. Second, the INA provides for mandatory detention of noncitizens subject to expedited removal under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1) and for other recent arrivals “seeking admission” referred to under § 1225(b)(2).
22. Third, the INA provides for detention of noncitizens who have received a final order of removal from the United States, including individuals in withholding-only proceedings, *see* 8 U.S.C. § 1231 (a)-(b).
23. This case concerns the detention provisions at § 1226(a) and § 1225(b)(2).

VII. CAUSES OF ACTION

COUNT I

Violation of 8 U.S.C. 1226(a) Unlawful Denial of Release on Bond

24. Petitioner incorporates by reference the allegations and facts set forth in paragraphs 1-18.
25. At the time of his arrest, Petitioner was a noncitizen present in the United States who had not been admitted, and thus he falls within the broad definition of “applicant for admission,” which is distinct from an “alien seeking admission,” and his detention is therefore governed by § 1226(a)(2).
26. The BIA has wrongfully construed § 1225(b)(2) as applying to all noncitizens who are found in the United States unlawfully, such as the Petitioner. *See Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025).

27. The BIA's decision in *Yajure Hurtado* erroneously synonymizes the terms "applicant for admission" and "alien seeking admission" in order to apply mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2) to an entire class of noncitizens for whom it was never intended by Congress.
28. The unlawful application of § 1225(b)(2) to Petitioner unlawfully mandates his continued detention without a discretionary bond hearing and violates the INA.

COUNT II

Violation of the Bond Regulations, 8 C.F.R. §§ 236.1 and 1003.19 Unlawful Denial of Release on Bond

29. Petitioner incorporates by reference the allegations and facts set forth in paragraphs 1-18.
30. In 1997, after Congress amended the INA through IIRIRA, EOIR and the then-Immigration and Naturalization Service issued an interim rule to interpret and apply IIRIRA. Specifically, under the headings of "Apprehension, Custody, and Detention of [Noncitizens]," 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). The agencies thus made clear that individuals who had entered without inspection were eligible for consideration for bond and bond hearings before Immigration Judges under 8 U.S.C. § 1226 and its implementing regulations.
31. Nonetheless, the BIA has asserted that, instead, § 1225(b)(2) should apply to those noncitizens "present without having been admitted or paroled."
32. The application of § 1225(b)(2) to Petitioner unlawfully mandates his continued detention and violates 8 C.F.R. §§ 236.1, 1236.1, and 1003.19.

COUNT III
Violation of Fifth Amendment Due Process Clause

33. Petitioner incorporates by reference the allegations and facts set forth in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
34. The Fifth Amendment provides that “[n]o person” shall “be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.”
35. “Freedom from imprisonment – from government custody, detention, or other forms of physical restraint – lies at the heart of the liberty that Clause protects.” *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 690 (2001).
36. Moreover, “[t]he Due Process Clause applies to all ‘persons’ within the United States, including aliens, whether their presence here is lawful, unlawful, temporary, or permanent.” *Id.* at 693.
37. Respondents’ mandatory detention of Petitioner without consideration for release on bond or access to a bond hearing violates his due process rights.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

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

- 1) Assume jurisdiction over this matter;
- 2) Grant Petitioner a writ of habeas corpus directing Respondents to immediately provide Petitioner with a bond hearing to determine if he may be released on bond under § 1226(a)(2) and the applicable regulations. See 8 C.F.R. §§ 236.1, 1236.1.
- 3) Order Respondents to refrain from transferring Petitioner out of the jurisdiction of this court during the pendency of these proceedings and while the Petitioner remains in Respondents’ custody;

- 4) Order Respondents to file a response within 3 days of the filing of this petition;
- 5) Award attorneys' fees to Petitioner; and
- 6) Grant any other and further relief which this Court deems just and proper.

I affirm, under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing is true and correct.

Respectfully submitted this January 27, 2026.

/s/ Matthew O. Boles
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LA Bar No. 37593
MANJI LAW, P.C.
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Verification

I declare under penalty of perjury that the facts set forth in the foregoing Verified Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

/s/ Matthew O. Boles

Date: January 27, 2026