

1 ADAM GORDON
United States Attorney
2 MICHAEL D. WALLACE
Assistant United States Attorney
3 Maryland Bar No. 9912160256
Office of the U.S. Attorney
4 880 Front Street, Room 6293
San Diego, CA 92101-8893
5 Telephone(619) 546-8714
Email: Michael.Wallace4@usdoj.gov

6 Attorneys for Respondents

7
8 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
9 **SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

10
11 FONKWA DONACIEN YUODOM
12 SHU,

13 Petitioner,

14 v.

15
16 WARDEN, Otay Mesa Detention
Center,

17 Respondent.
18

Case No.: 26-cv-2405-JES-AHG

**RETURN TO PETITION FOR WRIT
OF HABEAS CORPUS**

19
20 **I. INTRODUCTION**

21 Petitioner requests that the Court order his release from Immigration and
22 Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody or require that he be afforded a bond hearing. As
23 an alien found to have a credible fear of torture, however, Petitioner's detention is
24 mandated by 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(B)(ii) until the conclusion of his removal
25 proceedings. As Petitioner is subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. §
26 1225(b)(1)(B)(ii), the Court should deny Petitioner's requests for relief.

27
28

1 **II. FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND**

2 Petitioner is a native and citizen of Cameroon, who entered the United States
3 illegally and without inspection west of San Ysidro, California, on May 24, 2025.
4 Exhibit (Ex.)1 (Form I-213).¹ Petitioner did not then have any valid entry documents
5 to enter the United States and had not been admitted or paroled into the United States.
6 He was determined to be inadmissible under 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(7)(A)(i)(I) and 8
7 U.S.C. §1182(a)(6)(A)(i), placed in expedited removal proceedings pursuant to 8
8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1), and taken into Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
9 custody pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(B). Petitioner has remained in ICE custody
10 since his entry into the United States. An asylum officer interviewed Petitioner
11 pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(B) and made a positive assessment under the
12 Convention Against Torture. On September 5, 2025, Petitioner was issued a Notice to
13 Appear (NTA). Ex. 2 (Notice to Appear). The filing of the NTA initiated removal
14 proceedings, pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1229a, against Petitioner, and those proceedings
15 remain ongoing. Within his removal proceedings under § 1229a, Petitioner applied for
16 relief from removal before an immigration judge (IJ), including asylum under 8
17 U.S.C. § 1158, withholding of removal under 8 U.S.C. § 1231(b)(3), and relief under
18 the Convention Against Torture. The first master calendar hearing was scheduled for
19 September 25, 2025. *Id.* On February 3, 2026, the Department of Homeland Security
20 (DHS) provided notice to the Petitioner of its intent to remove Petitioner to a third
21 country pursuant to an Asylum Cooperation Agreement (ACA) with Uganda. Ex. 3 (IJ
22 Order). After three delays of the master calendar hearing to December 18, 2025, at
23 Petitioner's request to prepare, resulting in about three months of delay, an
24 immigration judge held a hearing on the motion to remove Petitioner pursuant to the
25 ACA. Ex. 4 (Event and Adjournment History). The immigration judge granted the

26 _____
27 ¹ The attached exhibits are true copies, with redactions of private information, of
28 documents obtained from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) counsel. Other
facts have been obtained from ICE counsel.

1 DHS motion and ordered Petitioner removed to Uganda on February 24, 2026. *Id.*
2 Petitioner filed an appeal with the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) on March 10,
3 2026. Petitioner’s removal proceedings remain pending. As a result, there is no
4 administratively final order of removal currently. Petitioner remains mandatorily
5 detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(B).

6 **III. STATUTORY BACKGROUND**

7 Section 235 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), codified at 8 U.S.C.
8 § 1225, applies to an “applicant for admission,” defined as an “alien present in the
9 United States who has not been admitted” or “who arrives in the United States.” 8
10 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1). “[A]pplicants for admission fall into one of two categories, those
11 covered by § 1225(b)(1) and those covered by § 1225(b)(2).” *Jennings v. Rodriguez*,
12 583 U.S. 281, 287 (2018).

13 Section 1225(b)(1) applies to arriving aliens and “certain other” aliens “initially
14 determined to be inadmissible due to fraud, misrepresentation, or lack of valid
15 document.” *Id.* (citing 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(A)(i)). These aliens are generally subject
16 to expedited removal proceedings. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(A)(i). But if “the alien
17 indicates an intention to apply for asylum . . . or a fear of persecution,” immigration
18 officers will refer the alien for a credible fear interview. 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(A)(ii).
19 “If the officer determines at the time of the interview that [the] alien has a credible fear
20 of persecution . . . , the alien *shall be detained* for further consideration of the
21 application for asylum.” 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(B)(ii) (emphasis added). If the alien
22 does not indicate an intent to apply for asylum, does not express a fear of persecution,
23 or is “found not to have such a fear,” they “shall be detained . . . until removed” from
24 the United States. 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225(b)(1)(A)(i), (B)(iii)(IV).

25 ////
26 ////
27 ////
28 ////

1
2 **IV. ARGUMENT**

3 **A. Petitioner is Lawfully Detained Under the INA and the Constitution.**

4 The Court must deny his habeas petition because Petitioner’s detention is
5 statutorily mandated under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(B)(ii) and has not been
6 unconstitutionally prolonged.

7 **1. Petitioner is mandatorily detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1).**

8 Petitioner’s claim fails because he is subject to mandatory detention under 8
9 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1). Under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1), an “applicant for admission” is
10 defined as an “alien present in the United States who has not been admitted or who
11 arrives in the United States.” As explained above, applicants for admission “fall into
12 one of two categories, those covered by § 1225(b)(1) and those covered by §
13 1225(b)(2).” *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 287. Section 1225(b)(1) – the provision relevant
14 here – applies because Petitioner was found in the United States without proper
15 documents authorizing his presence. And that statute mandates detention when an
16 immigration officer determines that the alien has a credible fear of persecution. *See* 8
17 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(B)(ii) (“If the officer determines at the time of the interview that
18 [the] alien has a credible fear of persecution . . . , the alien *shall be detained* for further
19 consideration of the application for asylum.”) (emphasis added); *see also Matter of M-*
20 *S*, 27 I. & N. Dec. 509, 519 (AG 2019) (“all aliens transferred from expedited to full
[removal] proceedings after establishing a credible fear are ineligible for bond”).

21 Petitioner requests that the Court order him released from ICE custody. But the
22 Supreme Court has rejected such contention, explaining: “Read most naturally,
23 §§ 1225(b)(1) and (b)(2) thus mandate detention of applicants for admission until
24 certain proceedings have concluded. . . . Nothing in the statutory text imposes any limit
25 on the length of detention. And neither § 1225(b)(1) nor § 1225(b)(2) says anything
26 whatsoever about bond hearings.” *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 297. Except for temporary
27 parole granted at the discretion of the Attorney General “for urgent humanitarian
28 reasons or significant public benefit” under 8 U.S.C. § 1182(d)(5), “there are no *other*

1 circumstances under which aliens detained under § 1225(b) may be released.” *Id.* at 300
2 (emphasis in original).

3 As Petitioner’s removal proceedings are pending, and he has not been granted
4 temporary parole, section 1225(b)(1)(B) mandates his detention until the proceedings
5 have concluded. *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 297 (“Once those proceedings end, detention
6 under § 1225(b) must end as well.”). Because Petitioner is lawfully detained under
7 section 1225(b)(1)(B) and the statute does not entitle him to release at this time, his
8 petition must be denied. *See, e.g., Zelaya-Gonzalez v. Matuszewski*, No. 23-CV-151
9 JLS-KSC, 2023 WL 3103811, at *3 (S.D. Cal. April 25, 2023) (applying *Jennings* to
10 find that the petitioner had no right to release or a bond hearing).

11 **2. Petitioner’s detention is not unconstitutionally prolonged.**

12 In *Jennings*, the Supreme Court evaluated the proper interpretation of 8 U.S.C.
13 § 1225(b). The Supreme Court stated that, “[r]ead most naturally, [8 U.S.C.]
14 §§ 1225(b)(1) and (b)(2) . . . mandate detention of applicants for admission until certain
15 proceedings have concluded.” *Id.* at 297. In other words, neither 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)
16 nor § 1225(b)(2) “impose[] any limit on the length of detention” and “neither
17 § 1225(b)(1) nor § 1225(b)(2) say[] anything whatsoever about bond hearings.” *Id.* The
18 Supreme Court added that the sole means of release for noncitizens detained pursuant
19 to 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225(b)(1) or (b)(2) prior to removal from the United States is temporary
20 parole at the discretion of the Attorney General under 8 U.S.C. § 1182(d)(5). *Id.* at 300
21 (“That express exception to detention implies that there are no *other* circumstances
22 under which aliens detained under [8 U.S.C.] § 1225(b) may be released.”) (emphasis
23 in original). “In sum, [8 U.S.C.] §§ 1225(b)(1) and (b)(2) mandate detention of aliens
24 throughout the completion of applicable proceedings[.]” *Id.* at 302.

25 In *Shaughnessy v. United States ex rel. Mezei*, 345 U.S. 206, 207–09 (1953), a
26 noncitizen in exclusion proceedings filed a habeas petition claiming that his prolonged
27 detention without a hearing violated his constitutional rights. The Supreme Court
28 rejected the petition, concluding that the noncitizen’s continued detention did not

1 deprive him of any due process rights, stating: “[A]n alien on the threshold of initial
2 entry stands on a different footing: ‘Whatever the procedure authorized by Congress
3 is, it is due process as far as an alien denied entry is concerned.’” *Id.* at 212 (citation
4 omitted). “*Mezei* therefore suggests that the Court found that excludable aliens simply
5 enjoy no constitutional right to be paroled into the United States, even if the only
6 alternative is prolonged detention.” *Barrera-Echavarria v. Rinson*, 44 F.3d 1441, 1450
7 (9th Cir. 1995) (en banc), *superseded by statute as stated in Xi v. INS*, 298 F.3d 832
8 (9th Cir. 2002). That is, “Supreme Court precedent squarely precludes a conclusion
9 that [excludable aliens] have a constitutional right to be free from detention, even for
10 an extended time.” *Id.* at 1449. *Barrera-Echavarria*’s application—at least as it relates
11 to arriving aliens—has never been overruled. The Ninth Circuit continues to cite
12 *Barrera-Echavarria*’s due process (i.e., non-statutory) analysis. *See Llamas-Lopez v.*
13 *Barr*, 825 F. App’x 523, 524 (Mem.) (9th Cir. 2020); *Angov v. Lynch*, 788 F.3d 893,
14 898 (9th Cir. 2015) (Angov’s “claim of a procedural due process violation simply can’t
15 be squared with the Supreme Court’s teachings in *Mezei*” and “our circuit’s settled
16 precedent”).

17 A district court within this Circuit provided a thorough summary of “the law of
18 the Ninth Circuit as it currently stands [including *Barrera-Echavarria*, and its
19 treatment by *Rodriguez II*, *Rodriguez III*, and *Rodriguez V*],” in *Ibarra-Perez v.*
20 *Howard*, 468 F. Supp. 3d 1156, 1177 (D. Arizona 2020). The court there reasoned that
21 “Respondents have the better side of this argument” and rejected the notion that an
22 arriving alien detained under § 1225(b) was entitled to a bond hearing, because it “must
23 do its best to discern and apply the law[.]” The above must be true because *Mezei* “is
24 still good law.” *See Aracely, R v. Nielsen*, 319 F. Supp. 3d 110, 145 (D.D.C. 2018).
25 “*Mezei* therefore remains binding precedent for our court—which means the Due
26 Process Clause does not forbid [petitioner’s] detention.” *Martinez v. Larose*, 980 F.3d
27 551, 554 (6th Cir. 2020) (Mem.) (Thapar, J., concurring in the denial of rehearing *en*
28 *banc* based on *Mezei* and *Thuraissigiam*).

1 And because it remains good law, *Mezei* “is directly on point and controls this
2 case.” *Poonjani v. Shanahan*, 319 F. Supp. 3d 644 (S.D.N.Y. 2018) (denying bond
3 because—for an alien on the “threshold of initial entry”—due process is “whatever
4 procedures has been authorized by Congress”). Other courts agree. *See Arana v. Arteta*,
5 2026 WL 279786 (S.D.N.Y. Feb. 3, 2026) (citing *Poonjani*); *Acosta v. Arteta*, 2026
6 WL 263470 (S.D.N.Y. Feb. 2, 2026) (citing *Poonjani*); *Mendez Ramirez v. Decker*,
7 612 F. Supp. 3d 200 (S.D.N.Y. 2020) (citing *Poonjani*); *Gonzalez Aguilar v. Wolf*, 448
8 F. Supp. 3d 1202, 1212 (D.N.M. 2020) (“*Mezei* and its progeny do not hold that
9 Petitioner has no due-process rights; rather, the applicable statutory process shapes her
10 procedural due-process rights. Because Petitioner has no statutory right to release or a
11 bond hearing, she has no procedural due-process right to the relief requested.”).

12 District courts in this Circuit that disagree generally neither grapple with *Mezei*
13 nor *Barrera-Echavarria*. *See Ibarra-Perez*, 468 F. Supp. 3d at 1177, fn. 25 (citing
14 *Poonjani* and rejecting the leading “prolonged detention” case, *Banda v. McAleenan*,
15 385 F. Supp. 3d 1099 (W.D. Wash. 2019), because *Banda* did not even discuss
16 *Barrera-Echavarria*, the “entry fiction” doctrine, or portions of *Rodriguez II and III*
17 and “seem to adopt *Barrera-Echavarria*’s logic as it pertains to arriving aliens”).

18 *Mezei* cannot be distinguished simply on “national security” grounds. Those
19 facts were immaterial. *See Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 693 (2001) (distinguishing
20 *Mezei* because he was treated “as if stopped at the border,” and “*that made all the*
21 *difference*”) (emphasis added). In fact, in *Barrera-Echavarria*, the dissent criticized
22 the majority’s reliance on *Mezei*, claiming that “[n]o such national security concerns
23 are implicated in *Barrera*’s case.” *See* 44 F.3d at 1452 (Pregerson, J., dissenting). Nor
24 can *Mezei* be dismissed as merely an exclusion case. *See id.* at 1449-50 (“[*Mezei*’s]
25 holding necessarily included a determination that *Mezei*’s detention was legal as
26 well.”); *see Zadvydas*, 533 U.S. at 693 (stating *Mezei* involved “indefinite detention”).
27 *Mezei* has direct application here; this precedent thus controls “until explicitly
28 overruled by that Court.” *United States v. Esqueda*, 88 F.4th 818, 828 (9th Cir. 2023).

1 In *Department of Homeland Security v. Thuraissigiam*, 591 U.S. 103, 138–40
2 (2020), the Supreme Court once again addressed the due process rights of inadmissible
3 arriving noncitizens seeking initial entry into the United States. The Supreme Court
4 stated that such individuals have no due process rights “other than those afforded by
5 statute.” *Id.* at 107; *see also id.* at 140 (“[A]n alien in respondent’s position has only
6 those rights regarding admission that Congress has provided by statute.”). The
7 Supreme Court noted that its determination was supported by “more than a century of
8 precedent.” *Id.* at 138 (citing *Nishimura Ekiu v. United States*, 142 U.S. 651, 660
9 (1892); *U.S. ex rel. Knauff v. Shaughnessy*, 338 U.S. 537, 544 (1950); *Mezei*, 345 U.S.
10 at 212; *Landon v. Plasencia*, 459 U.S. 21, 32 (1982)). Because the only process due
11 Petitioner is that afforded under section 1225(b), the Court must reject his claim that
12 his detention violates the Fifth Amendment’s Due Process Clause and deny his
13 requested relief. *See Thuraissigiam*, 591 U.S. at 138–40; *Mendoza-Linares*, 51 F.4th at
14 1167; *Rodriguez Diaz v. Garland*, 53 F.4th 1189, 1206 (9th Cir. 2022) (“The
15 recognized liberty interests of U.S. citizens and aliens are not coextensive: the Supreme
16 Court has ‘firmly and repeatedly endorsed the proposition that Congress may make
17 rules as to aliens that would be unacceptable if applied to citizens.’”) (quoting *Demore*
18 *v. Kim*, 538 U.S. 510, 522 (2003)); *Zelaya-Gonzalez*, 2023 WL 3103811, at *4
19 (“Binding Ninth Circuit and Supreme Court precedents are clear that Petitioner lacks
20 any rights beyond those conferred by statute, and no statute entitles Petitioner to a bond
21 hearing.”).

22 Since the Supreme Court’s decision in *Thuraissigiam*, numerous published
23 decisions have acknowledged *Thuraissigiam*’s impact on the precise Fifth Amendment
24 Due Process Clause claim that Petitioner has raised in this petition: Does an alien
25 detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1) have a due process right to release or a bond
26 hearing after being detained for a certain period of time? The answer is no. *See*
27 *Mendoza-Linares v. Garland*, No. 21-cv-1169-BEN (AHG), 2024 WL 3316306, *2
28 (S.D. Cal. June 10, 2024) (“[T]he Court finds that Petitioner has no Fifth Amendment

1 right to a bond hearing pending his removal proceedings.”); *Zelaya-Gonzalez*, 2023
2 WL 3103811. *3 (S.D. Cal. Apr. 25, 2023) (same); *Rodriguez Figueroa v. Garland*,
3 535 F. Supp. 3d 122, 126–27 (W.D.N.Y. 2021); *Gonzales Garcia v. Rosen*, 513 F.
4 Supp. 3d 329, 336 (W.D.N.Y. 2021); *St. Charles v. Barr*, 514 F. Supp. 3d 570, 579
5 (W.D.N.Y. 2021); *Petgrave v. Aleman*, 529 F. Supp. 3d 665, 667 (S.D. Tex. 2021).

6 Even if the Court infers a constitutional right against prolonged mandatory
7 detention, Petitioner’s claim still fails. “In general, as detention continues past a year,
8 courts become extremely wary of permitting continued custody absent a bond hearing.”
9 *Sibomana v. LaRose*, No. 22-cv-933-LL-NLS, 2023 WL 3028093, at *4 (S.D. Cal.
10 April 20, 2023) (citation omitted); *see also Durand v. Allen*, No. 3:23-cv-00279-RBM-
11 BGS, 2024 WL 711607, at *5 (S.D. Cal. Feb. 21, 2024) (detained over two-and-a-half
12 years); *Sanchez-Rivera v. Matuszewski*, No. 22-cv-1357-MMA (JLB), 2023 WL
13 139801, at *6 (S.D. Cal. Jan. 9, 2023) (three years); *Yagao v. Figueroa*,
14 No. 17-cv-2224-AJB-MDD, 2019 WL 1429582, at *2 (S.D. Cal. March 29, 2019) (two
15 years).

16 In similar cases, courts in this district have applied the test in *Lopez v. Garland*,
17 631 F. Supp. 3d 870, 879 (E.D. Cal. 2022). *See, e.g., Sanchez-Rivera*, 2023 WL 139801,
18 at *5 (“[W]hile the *Mathews* [*v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319 (1976)] factors may be well-
19 suited to determining whether due process requires a second bond hearing, they are not
20 particularly dispositive of whether prolonged mandatory detention has become
21 unreasonable in a particular case.”); *D.D. v. LaRose, et al.*, Case No. 25-cv-02581-BJC-
22 JLB, ECF No. 10 at 7 (S.D. Cal. Oct. 22, 2025) (considering a similar claim and finding
23 “the three-factor balancing test from *Lopez* . . . provides an appropriate assessment of
24 the possible constitutional implications of Petitioner’s ongoing detention without
25 process.”). Under *Lopez*, to determine whether continued mandatory detention has
26 become unreasonable, “the Court will look to the total length of detention to date, the
27 likely duration of future detention, and the delays in the removal proceedings caused by
28 the petitioner and the government.” 631 F. Supp. 3d at 879.

1 First, Petitioner has been detained for about eleven months. The government
2 made no requests for delays in the proceedings. The length of this period of detention
3 is considerably shorter than many of the lengths of detention where the Courts in this
4 district have found detention to be unreasonably prolonged. *See Durand v. Allen*, No.
5 3:23-cv-00279-RBM-BGS, 2024 WL 711607 at *5 (S.D. Cal. Feb. 21, 2024) (32
6 months); *Sibomana*, 2023 WL 3028093, at *4 (19 months); *Sanchez-Rivera*, 2023 WL
7 139801 at *6 (three years); *Kydyrali v. Wolf*, 499 F. Supp. 3d 768, 773 (S.D. Cal. 2020)
8 (27 months); *Yagao*, 2019 WL 1429582, at *1 (42 months). The length of detention “is
9 the most important factor.” *Sanchez-Rivera*, 2023 WL 139801, at *6 (citation omitted).
10 Petitioner’s current detention does not fall within the range those courts have found to
11 be unreasonable. Moreover, the length of Petitioner’s detention, by itself, does not
12 favor granting habeas relief. *See Sadeqi v. LaRose*, No. 25-cv-2587-RSH-BJW, 2025
13 WL 3154520, at *3 (S.D. Cal. Nov. 12, 2025) (“The Court agrees with Respondents
14 that the length of Petitioner’s detention to date—almost 12 months—does not by itself,
15 without more, establish prolonged detention in violation of due process.”). Second, the
16 likely duration of future detention weighs against neither party as both parties can only
17 speculate as to whether Petitioner’s appeal to the BIA will be quickly dismissed or not.
18 Once the BIA rules, his path to removal or release will become clear. Finally, the only
19 requests for delay were made by Petitioner. The only delays attributable to
20 Respondents are the necessary time to process the Petitioner’s entry and schedule his
21 initial hearing. This factor favors Respondents.

22 Balancing the above factors, the record does not support a finding that “detention
23 has become so unreasonable as to require an initial bond hearing,” *Sanchez-Rivera*,
24 2023 WL 139801, at *6, or an order requiring Petitioner’s release.

25 Accordingly, Petitioner is subject to mandatory detention, which does not violate
26 due process. *See Cordova Cordova*, No. 25-cv-2426-BAS-DDL, ECF No. 9 (S.D. Cal.
27 Nov. 14, 2025) (denying similar petition asserting similar claims); *Markov v. LaRose*,
28 No. 25-CV-3811 JLS (SBC), 2026 WL 92069 (S.D. Cal. Jan. 13, 2026) (“Petitioner’s

1 length of detention, without more, does not render his detention unreasonable.”); *Duran*
2 *Romero v. LaRose*, No. 25-cv-3567-AGS-VET, ECF No. 7 (S.D. Cal. Jan. 14, 2026);
3 *Shahin v. Noem*, No. 25-cv-2496-AGS-KSC, ECF No. 12 (S.D. Cal. Dec. 23, 2025);
4 *Mendez Ramirez*, 612 F. Supp. 3d at 221; *Gonzalez Aguilar v. Wolf*, 448 F. Supp. 3d at
5 1212; *de la Rosa Espinoza*, 2020 WL 3452967, at *6-8.

6 **V. CONCLUSION**

7 For the reasons stated herein, Respondents respectfully request that the Court
8 deny the Petitioner’s requests for relief on the merits.

9
10 Dated: April 23, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

11 ADAM GORDON
12 United States Attorney

13 s/ Michael D. Wallace
14 MICHAEL D. WALLACE
15 Assistant United States Attorney
16 Attorneys for Respondents
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28