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**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

OSAMA MAKHLOUF,

Petitioner,

v.

CHRISTOPHER LAROSE, Warden of
Otay Mesa Detention Center; *et al.*,

Respondents.

Case No.: 26-cv-02636-LEK-JLB

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

I. INTRODUCTION

Petitioner requests that the Court order his release from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody. However, as an applicant for admission to the United States found to have a credible fear of persecution, Petitioner's detention is mandated by 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(B)(ii) until the conclusion of his removal proceedings. Accordingly, the Court should deny Petitioner's request for relief.

II. FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

Petitioner is a native and citizen of Syria, who entered the United States without inspection near San Ysidro, California, on June 5, 2025. *See* ECF No. 1 at 7; Exhibit 1 (Form I-213).¹ Petitioner did not then have any valid entry documents to enter the United States. He was determined to be inadmissible under 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(7)(A)(i)(I), placed in expedited removal proceedings pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1), and taken into Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(B). *See* Exhibit 2 (Notice and Order of Expedited Removal). He was then interviewed by an asylum officer, pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(B). After receiving a positive credible fear determination, Petitioner was issued a Notice to Appear (NTA), which initiated removal proceedings against Petitioner, pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1229a. *See* Exhibit 3 (Notice to Appear). Petitioner subsequently filed applications for relief, including Asylum relief under 8 U.S.C. § 1158, withholding of removal under 8 U.S.C. § 1231(b)(3), and relief under the Convention Against Torture.

On February 18, 2026, Petitioner's removal hearing took place. *See* Exhibit 4 (Order of the Immigration Judge). There, the immigration judge denied Petitioner's applications for relief and found Petitioner is subject to removal to Syria. *Id.* On March 20, 2026, Petitioner filed an appeal with the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA). *See* Exhibit 5. The appeal is still pending. As a result, there is no administratively final order of removal at this time. Petitioner remains mandatorily detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(B).

III. STATUTORY BACKGROUND

Section 235 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), codified at 8 U.S.C. § 1225, applies to an "applicant for admission," defined as an "alien present in the

¹ The attached exhibits are true copies, with redactions of private information, of documents obtained from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) counsel.

United States who has not been admitted” or “who arrives in the United States.” 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1). “[A]pplicants for admission fall into one of two categories, those covered by § 1225(b)(1) and those covered by § 1225(b)(2).” *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 287 (2018).

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

IV. ARGUMENT

A. Petitioner’s Claim is Barred Under 8 U.S.C. § 1252(g).

Respondents contend that judicial review over Petitioner’s claim is barred by 28 U.S.C. § 1252(g), which states that “[n]o court shall have jurisdiction to hear any cause or claim by or on behalf of any alien arising from the decision or action by the Attorney General to commence proceedings, adjudicate cases, or execute removal orders.”

Here, Petitioner’s claims of unlawful detention necessarily arise from the Department of Homeland Security’s² decision to commence removal proceedings against him because that decision unavoidably triggers mandatory detention under 8

² “In 2002, Congress transferred the Attorney General’s immigration enforcement responsibilities to the Secretary of Homeland Security.” *Ibarra-Perez v. United States*, 154 F.4th 989, 995 n.2 (9th Cir. 2025).

1 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(B)(ii) until the conclusion of his removal proceedings. *See, e.g.,*
2 *Wang v. United States*, No. CV 10-0389 SVW (RCx), 2010 WL 11463156, at *6 (C.D.
3 Cal. Aug. 18, 2010) (finding section 1252(g) bars judicial review of false imprisonment
4 claim because the plaintiff’s detention arose from the decision to commence removal
5 proceedings, and in turn, the “statute mandating detention during removal proceedings
6 of a person charged as an ‘arriving alien.’”).

7 As explained by another district court, removal proceedings are commenced
8 when, as occurred here, “the alien is issued a Notice to Appear before an immigration
9 court.” *Herrera-Correra v. United States*, No. CV 08–2941 DSF (JCx), 2008 WL
10 11336833, at *3 (C.D. Cal. Sept. 11, 2008); *see also* Exhibit 3 (Notice to Appear). The
11 government “may arrest the alien against whom proceedings are commenced and detain
12 that individual until the conclusion of those proceedings.” *Herrera-Correra*, 2008 WL
13 11336833, at *3. “Thus, an alien’s detention throughout this process arises from the
14 [government’s] decision to commence proceedings” and review of claims arising from
15 such detention is barred under section 1252(g). *Id.* (citing *Sissoko v. Rocha*, 509 F.3d
16 947, 949 (9th Cir. 2007)); *see also Wang*, 2010 WL 11463156, at *6.

17 Because this habeas petition brings a claim “arising from the decision or action
18 by the [government] to commence proceedings,” review of Petitioner’s claim is barred
19 under 8 U.S.C § 1252(g). Thus, the Court must dismiss the petition.

20 **B. Petitioner is Lawfully Detained Under the INA and the Constitution.**

21 Petitioner’s detention is statutorily mandated under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(B)(ii)
22 and has not been unconstitutionally prolonged. Accordingly, the Court must deny his
23 habeas petition.

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

25 Petitioner’s claim fails because he is subject to mandatory detention under 8
26 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1). Under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1), an “applicant for admission” is
27 defined as an “alien present in the United States who has not been admitted or who
28 arrives in the United States.” As explained above, applicants for admission “fall into

one of two categories, those covered by § 1225(b)(1) and those covered by § 1225(b)(2).” *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 287. Section 1225(b)(1) – the provision relevant here – applies because Petitioner was found in the United States without proper documents authorizing his presence. And that statute mandates detention when an immigration officer determines that the alien has a credible fear of persecution. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(B)(ii) (“If the officer determines at the time of the interview that [the] alien has a credible fear of persecution . . . , the alien *shall be detained* for further consideration of the application for asylum.”) (emphasis added); *see also Matter of M-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”).

Petitioner requests that the Court order him released from ICE custody. But the Supreme Court has rejected such contention, explaining: “Read most naturally, §§ 1225(b)(1) and (b)(2) thus mandate detention of applicants for admission until certain proceedings have concluded. . . . Nothing in the statutory text imposes any limit on the length of detention. And neither § 1225(b)(1) nor § 1225(b)(2) says anything whatsoever about bond hearings.” *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 297. Except for temporary parole granted at the discretion of the Attorney General “for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit” under 8 U.S.C. § 1182(d)(5), “there are no *other* circumstances under which aliens detained under § 1225(b) may be released.” *Id.* at 300 (emphasis in original).

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

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

2 In *Jennings*, the Supreme Court evaluated the proper interpretation of 8 U.S.C.
3 § 1225(b). The Supreme Court stated that, “[r]ead most naturally, [8 U.S.C.]
4 §§ 1225(b)(1) and (b)(2) . . . mandate detention of applicants for admission until certain
5 proceedings have concluded.” *Id.* at 297. In other words, neither 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)
6 nor § 1225(b)(2) “impose[] any limit on the length of detention” and “neither
7 § 1225(b)(1) nor § 1225(b)(2) say[] anything whatsoever about bond hearings.” *Id.* The
8 Supreme Court added that the sole means of release for noncitizens detained pursuant
9 to 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225(b)(1) or (b)(2) prior to removal from the United States is temporary
10 parole at the discretion of the Attorney General under 8 U.S.C. § 1182(d)(5). *Id.* at 300
11 (“That express exception to detention implies that there are no *other* circumstances
12 under which aliens detained under [8 U.S.C.] § 1225(b) may be released.”) (emphasis
13 in original). “In sum, [8 U.S.C.] §§ 1225(b)(1) and (b)(2) mandate detention of aliens
14 throughout the completion of applicable proceedings[.]” *Id.* at 302.

15 In *Shaughnessy v. United States ex rel. Mezei*, 345 U.S. 206, 207–09 (1953), a
16 noncitizen in exclusion proceedings filed a habeas petition claiming that his prolonged
17 detention without a hearing violated his constitutional rights. The Supreme Court
18 rejected the petition, concluding that the noncitizen’s continued detention did not
19 deprive him of any due process rights, stating: “[A]n alien on the threshold of initial
20 entry stands on a different footing: ‘Whatever the procedure authorized by Congress
21 is, it is due process as far as an alien denied entry is concerned.’” *Id.* at 212 (citation
22 omitted).

23 In *Department of Homeland Security v. Thuraissigiam*, 591 U.S. 103, 138–40
24 (2020), the Supreme Court once again addressed the due process rights of inadmissible
25 arriving noncitizens seeking initial entry into the United States. The Supreme Court
26 stated that such individuals have no due process rights “other than those afforded by
27 statute.” *Id.* at 107; *see also id.* at 140 (“[A]n alien in respondent’s position has only
28 those rights regarding admission that Congress has provided by statute.”). The

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

16 Since the Supreme Court’s decision in *Thuraissigiam*, numerous published
17 decisions have acknowledged *Thuraissigiam*’s impact on the precise Fifth Amendment
18 Due Process Clause that Petitioner might have raised in this petition: Does an alien
19 detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1) have a due process right to release or a bond
20 hearing after being detained for a certain period of time? The answer is no. *See*
21 *Mendoza-Linares v. Garland*, No. 21-cv-1169-BEN (AHG), 2024 WL 3316306, *2
22 (S.D. Cal. June 10, 2024) (“[T]he Court finds that Petitioner has no Fifth Amendment
23 right to a bond hearing pending his removal proceedings.”); *Zelaya-Gonzalez*, 2023
24 WL 3103811. *3 (S.D. Cal. Apr. 25, 2023) (same); *Rodriguez Figueroa v. Garland*,
25 535 F. Supp. 3d 122, 126–27 (W.D.N.Y. 2021); *Gonzales Garcia v. Rosen*, 513 F.
26 Supp. 3d 329, 336 (W.D.N.Y. 2021); *St. Charles v. Barr*, 514 F. Supp. 3d 570, 579
27 (W.D.N.Y. 2021); *Petgrave v. Aleman*, 529 F. Supp. 3d 665, 667 (S.D. Tex. 2021).

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

12 In similar cases, courts in this district have applied the test in *Lopez v. Garland*,
13 631 F. Supp. 3d 870, 879 (E.D. Cal. 2022). *See, e.g., Sanchez-Rivera*, 2023 WL 139801,
14 at *5 ("[W]hile the *Mathews [v. Eldridge]*, 424 U.S. 319 (1976)] factors may be well-
15 suited to determining whether due process requires a second bond hearing, they are not
16 particularly dispositive of whether prolonged mandatory detention has become
17 unreasonable in a particular case."); *D.D. v. LaRose, et al.*, Case No. 25-cv-02581-BJC-
18 JLB, ECF No. 10 at 7 (S.D. Cal. Oct. 22, 2025) (considering a similar claim and finding
19 "the three-factor balancing test from *Lopez* . . . provides an appropriate assessment of
20 the possible constitutional implications of Petitioner's ongoing detention without
21 process.").

22 Under *Lopez*, to determine whether continued mandatory detention has become
23 unreasonable, "the Court will look to the total length of detention to date, the likely
24 duration of future detention, and the delays in the removal proceedings caused by the
25 petitioner and the government." 631 F. Supp. 3d at 879.

26 First, Petitioner has been detained for approximately eleven months. Courts in
27 this district have found detention for much longer periods to be unreasonably
28 prolonged. *See Durand v. Allen*, No. 3:23-cv-00279-RBM-BGS, 2024 WL 711607 at

*5 (S.D. Cal. Feb. 21, 2024) (32 months); *Sibomana*, 2023 WL 3028093, at *4 (19 months); *Sanchez-Rivera*, 2023 WL 139801 at *6 (three years); *Kydyrali v. Wolf*, 499 F. Supp. 3d 768, 773 (S.D. Cal. 2020) (27 months); *Yagao*, 2019 WL 1429582, at *1 (42 months). The length of detention “is the most important factor.” *Sanchez-Rivera*, 2023 WL 139801, at *6 (citation omitted). And Petitioner’s current detention does not fall within the range those courts have found to be unreasonable. Moreover, the length of Petitioner’s detention, by itself, does not favor granting habeas relief. *See Sadeqi v. LaRose*, No. 25-cv-2587-RSH-BJW, 2025 WL 3154520, at *3 (S.D. Cal. Nov. 12, 2025) (“The Court agrees with Respondents that the length of Petitioner’s detention to date—almost 12 months—does not by itself, without more, establish prolonged detention in violation of due process.”). Not only does the length of Petitioner’s detention fall comparatively short of the length courts in this district have found to warrant habeas relief, but the other *Lopez* factors do not favor habeas relief either. Second, the likely duration of future detention weighs against Petitioner. On February 18, 2026, an immigration judge ordered Petitioner’s removal to Syria. *See* Exhibit 4. Petitioner promptly filed an appeal, which is still pending with the BIA. *See* Exhibit 5. Finally, there is no indication of any delay in the removal proceedings on the part of the government.

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

Accordingly, Petitioner is subject to mandatory detention, which does not violate due process. *See Markov v. LaRose*, No. 25-CV-3811 JLS (SBC), 2026 WL 92069 (S.D. Cal. Jan. 13, 2026) (“Petitioner’s length of detention, without more, does not render his detention unreasonable.”); *Duran Romero v. LaRose*, No. 25-cv-3567-AGS-VET, ECF No. 7 (S.D. Cal. Jan. 14, 2026); *Shahin v. Noem*, No. 25-cv-2496-AGS-KSC, ECF No. 12 (S.D. Cal. Dec. 23, 2025); *Cordova Cordova*, No. 25-cv-2426-BAS-DDL, ECF No. 9 (S.D. Cal. Nov. 14, 2025); *Mendez Ramirez*, 612 F. Supp. 3d at 221; *Gonzalez Aguilar*

1 v. *Wolf*, 448 F. Supp. 3d at 1212; *de la Rosa Espinoza*, 2020 WL 3452967, at *6-8.

2 V. CONCLUSION

3 For the reasons stated herein, Respondents respectfully request that the Court
4 dismiss this petition for lack of jurisdiction or deny it on the merits.

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6 Dated: May 5, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

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