

SUPPLEMENT TO HABEAS CORPUS PETITION

FILED

MAY 26 2026

CLERK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
BY:  DEPUTY

Supplement to Case No. 26-cv-2519-BAS
Vitalii Popov - 
Otay Mesa Detention Center
Date: May 16, 2026

I have been detained at the Otay Mesa Detention Center since September 18, 2025. During my detention, I repeatedly asked ICE officers about the status of my case. I was consistently told that I had a motion pending before the BIA to reopen my appeal. Later, I requested bond, which was denied on November 19. On December 3, I filed a bond appeal, and to this day I have not received any decision regarding that appeal.

Every month I continued asking ICE officers about my case, and the response was always the same: that my motion and bond appeal were pending. During all this time, ICE took no meaningful action regarding my removal.

On April 14, 2026, I prepared my Habeas Corpus petition and gave it to the case manager to be sent by the fastest available mail service. I paid approximately \$35 from my account because I was told it would be delivered within one or two days. However, the petition was not mailed until about a week later, and only after ICE officers came to me — apparently after reading my Habeas Corpus petition — and demanded that I sign deportation paperwork.

I refused to sign because I had already been detained for more than 180 days without meaningful progress in my case. If there was truly a final order of removal, then removal should have been executed within the statutory removal period. Continued detention beyond 180 days without proper justification violates U.S. law and constitutes unlawful prolonged detention.

On May 11, 2026, ICE attempted to deport me to Russia. Several days before that, ICE officers told me that if I did not cooperate with ICE, the Habeas Corpus case would not help me. I want to make clear that I am not refusing to cooperate with the government, and I am not refusing removal from the United States. My only request is that I not be deported to Russia, but instead to another country, because I believe I will be killed there. I stated this fear both in my immigration case and in my Form I-589.

When ICE transported me to the airport, officers told me they understood that I did not want to go to Russia and offered instead to send me to Casablanca. I agreed to this proposal. However, after I was brought to the airline counter and checked in, the boarding passes showed the following route:

San Diego → New York
New York → Casablanca
Casablanca → Moscow

I immediately asked the ICE officer what guarantee I had that my passport would be returned to me in Casablanca. No one could answer my question. I again explained that they were effectively sending me to my death in Russia, and I refused to board the flight.

I was returned to the vehicle and placed in handcuffs. After approximately ten minutes, an ICE officer and a detention officer opened the door, grabbed me by the leg and by the chain restraints, used profanity, and told me that I would fly no matter what. I resisted, and another officer eventually intervened and stopped the situation from escalating further. I was then returned to the detention center.

I want to repeat once again that I am not refusing to cooperate with the government. I am only asking either for the opportunity to continue fighting for my life through lawful legal procedures, or alternatively to be removed to another country instead of Russia.

I respectfully ask the Court to consider that while living in the United States I obeyed the laws of this country and committed no crimes. I also ask the Court to consider that I have never relied on government assistance. I am a highly qualified engineer and believe I can continue to be useful and productive in the future.

I do not have meaningful assistance from attorneys, and I can rely only on myself, my efforts, and the fairness and reasonableness of this Court.