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[redacted]

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

CHAIPING EUGENE HONGIE,

Petitioner,

v.

MARKWAYNE MULLIN, Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, TODD BLANCHE, Acting Attorney General, TODD M. LYONS, Acting Director, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, JESUS ROCHA, Acting Field Office Director, San Diego Field Office, CHRISTOPHER LAROSE, Warden at Otay Mesa Detention Center,

Respondents.

Civil Case No:26-cv-4073-JLS-JAC

Amended Petition for a Writ of Habeas Corpus

INTRODUCTION

Chaiping Eugene Hongie has been detained pending his immigration proceedings for over seven months. This Court should "join[] the majority of courts across the country in concluding that [his] unreasonably prolonged detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b) without an individualized bond hearing violates due process." *Kydyrali v. Wolf*, 499 F. Supp. 3d 768, 772 (S.D. Cal. 2020) (Battaglia, J.). It should do so because Mr. Hongie satisfies the six-factor test set forth in *Banda v. McAleenan*, 385 F. Supp. 3d 1099, 1118 (W.D. Wash. 2019).

STATEMENT OF FACTS

Mr. Hongie was born in Cameroon. Exhibit A, Declaration of Chaiping Eugene Hongie at ¶ 1. In July 2024, Mr. Hongie was kidnapped by the military, held for over 40 days, and severely beaten. *Id.* at ¶ 1. He was able to escape detention, and his parents help him get a visa to flee to Brazil. *Id.* at ¶ 1. When the government found out that his parents helped him escape, they killed his parents. *Id.* at ¶ 1. He came to the United States to seek asylum from his home country and the violence he experienced. *Id.* at ¶ 2.

On December 11, 2025, Mr. Hongie entered the United States through Mexico. *Id.* at ¶ 2. He went directly to a border patrol office and turned himself in. *Id.* at ¶ 2. After, he was brought to Otay Mesa Detention Center and has been there ever since. *Id.* at ¶ 2.

Mr. Hongie had a credible fear interview shortly after he arrived, and he passed. *Id.* at ¶ 3. He subsequently applied for asylum, but his application was denied on June 8, 2026. *Id.* at ¶ 3. He filed an appeal of this denial with the BIA on June 23, 2026. *Id.* at ¶ 3. If the BIA dismisses his appeal, he plans to appeal to the Ninth Circuit. *Id.* at ¶ 3.

It has been over seven months since Mr. Hongie was first detained. *Id.* at ¶ 4. He is having an especially difficult time in detention because of the injuries he

suffered when he was kidnapped. *Id.* at ¶ 5. His shoulder was severely injured during his kidnapping and is now deformed. *Id.* at ¶ 5. The only way to fix it is with surgery, and he has not gotten that. *Id.* at ¶ 5.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

I. The Fifth Amendment's Due Process Clause prohibits prolonged immigration detention without a bond hearing.

This habeas petition presents a question about whether and when the Fifth Amendment's Due Process Clause countermands the government's statutory authority to detain immigrants without bond hearings. Mr. Hongie is detained under one such statute, 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b). "Section 1225 applies to 'applicants for admission'—noncitizens who 'arrive[] in the United States,' or are 'present' in the United States but have 'not been admitted.'" *Banda v. McAleenan*, 385 F. Supp. 3d 1099, 1111 (W.D. Wash. 2019). It "applies to, among others, noncitizens initially determined to be inadmissible because of . . . lack of valid documentation." *Id.* That includes persons who, like Mr. Hongie, seek asylum at or near the border. *See id.* at 1109–11 (describing a similar procedural history and finding that petitioner was detained under § 1225(b)). Such immigrants are detained under § 1225(b) not only during their initial proceedings, but also when they appeal to the BIA. *See id.* at 1111 (reaching same conclusion for immigrant with pending BIA appeal).

This statutory scheme has left courts to grapple with the limits (if any) of that detention power: Does this statute permit the government to detain immigrants indefinitely, without ever having to prove at a bond hearing that they pose a risk of danger or flight? Three Supreme Court cases are potentially relevant to answering that question.

First, in *Zadvydas v. Davis*, the Supreme Court indicated that indefinite immigration detention raises serious due process concerns. 533 U.S. 678 (2001). *Zadvydas* involved a statute authorizing the government to detain immigrants

after they are ordered removed. *Id.* at 683. For immigrants who cannot be removed, that statute had the potential to subject them to years, decades, or a lifetime in custody. *See id.* at 690. The Supreme Court held that if the statue "permit[ed] indefinite detention of an alien[,] [it] would raise a serious constitutional problem," because

> [t]he Fifth Amendment's Due Process Clause forbids the Government to 'depriv[e]' any 'person ... of ... liberty ... without due process of law.' Freedom from imprisonment—from government custody, detention, or other forms of physical restraint—lies at the heart of the liberty that Clause protects. *See Foucha v. Louisiana,* 504 U.S. 71, 80 (1992). And this Court has said that government detention violates that Clause unless the detention is ordered in a *criminal* proceeding with adequate procedural protections, *see United States v. Salerno,* 481 U.S. 739, 746 (1987), or, in certain special and 'narrow' nonpunitive 'circumstances,' *Foucha, supra,* at 80, where a special justification, such as harm-threatening mental illness, outweighs the 'individual's constitutionally protected interest in avoiding physical restraint.' *Kansas v. Hendricks,* 521 U.S. 346, 356 (1997).

Id. Ultimately, however, the Court declined to decide whether a statute permitting indefinite detention would violate the Due Process Clause. Instead, the Court employed the constitutional avoidance canon to read implicit limits into the statute, requiring release after detention became sufficiently prolonged. *Id.* at 699.

Following *Zadvydas*, the Ninth Circuit applied similar reasoning to § 1225(b). *Rodriguez v. Robbins*, 804 F.3d 1060, 1087–89 (9th Cir. 2015). Employing the constitutional avoidance canon, the Ninth Circuit held that § 1225(b) implicitly entitled detained immigrants to bond hearings every six months. *Id.*

The Supreme Court overruled that precedent in *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, holding that the statute does not entitle detainees to bond hearings or otherwise impose "any limit on the length of detention." 583 U.S. 281, 297 (2018). But though *Jennings* held that § 1225(b) imposes no statutory limit on the length of

detention, it reserved the question of whether prolonged, mandatory detention without bond hearings violates due process. *Id.* at 312.

Finally, the Supreme Court held in *Demore v. Kim* that at least some statutes mandating detention during immigration proceedings do not automatically violate the Due Process Clause. 538 U.S. 510, 513 (2003). *Demore* addressed 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c), which mandates detention without a bond hearing for persons with certain criminal convictions. *Id.* The Court upheld § 1226(c) in a 5-4 opinion based on (1) the government interests justifying the detention of immigrants with certain, aggravated criminal convictions, and (2) the relative brevity of detention in most cases, with the vast majority taking only about five months. *Id.* at 517–31. Justice Kennedy supplied a deciding vote. His concurrence left open the possibility that individual immigrants could be "entitled to an individualized determination as to his risk of flight and dangerousness if the continued detention became unreasonable or unjustified." *Id.* at 532–33.

"In the wake of *Jennings*," *Zadvydas*, and *Demore*, "district courts have grappled with how to address due process challenges to prolonged mandatory detention under § 1225(b)." *Banda*, 385 F. Supp. 3d at 1116. But after a full evaluation, "[n]early all district courts that have considered the issue agree that prolonged mandatory detention pending removal proceedings, without a bond hearing, will—at some point—violate the right to due process." *Id.* (cleaned up) (collecting cases).

These Courts have relied on the due process concerns recognized in *Zadvydas*. *See, e.g.*, *Kydyrali*, 499 F. Supp. 3d at 771; *Banda*, 385 F. Supp. 3d at 1113–17; *Abdul Kadir v. Larose*, No. 25CV1045-LL-MMP, 2025 WL 2932654, at *3 (S.D. Cal. Oct. 15, 2025). As the Ninth Circuit put it in *Jennings*' wake, those considerations raise "grave doubts that any statute that allows for arbitrary prolonged detention without any process is constitutional or that those who founded our democracy precisely to protect against the government's arbitrary

deprivation of liberty would have thought so." *Rodriguez v. Marin*, 909 F.3d 252, 256 (9th Cir. 2018).

Neither *Jennings* nor *Demore* undermines that conclusion. *Jennings* held only that the statute itself did not impose any limits on detention. It "did not foreclose as-applied constitutional challenges to detention under" mandatory-detention statutes. *Santos v. Warden Pike Cnty. Corr. Facility*, 965 F.3d 203, 209 (3d Cir. 2020). And *Demore* held only that conviction-based mandatory detention during immigration proceedings does not necessarily violate due process, particularly when the detention has an expected duration of about five months. *Id.* at 208–11. As Justice Kennedy's concurrence made clear, *Demore* does not prevent immigrants from arguing that sufficiently prolonged detention violates due process in their individual cases. *See id.*[1]

Thus, this Court should hold that sufficiently prolonged detention violates the Due Process Clause, as most courts have. *See, e.g.*, *Gao v. LaRose*, No. 25-CV-2084-RSH-SBC, 2025 WL 2770633, at *3 (S.D. Cal. Sept. 26, 2025); *Abdul Kadir v. Larose*, No. 25CV1045-LL-MMP, 2025 WL 2932654, at *4 (S.D. Cal. Oct. 15, 2025); *Cong v. Noem*, No. 25-CV-3730-GPC-DEB, 2026 WL 76566, at *3 (S.D. Cal. Jan. 9, 2026); *Kydyrali v. Wolf*, 499 F. Supp. 3d 768, 772 (S.D. Cal. 2020) (Battaglia, J.); *Mardian v. Mayorkas*, 25-cv-3467-JLS; *Raeva v. Mayorkas*, 25-cv-3175-JO; *Abdul-Samed v. Warden of Golden State Annex Det. Facility*, No. 25-cv-98-SAB-HC, 2025 WL 2099343, at *6 (E.D. Cal. July 25, 2025); *Hernandez v. Wofford*, No. 25-cv-986-KES-CDB (HC), 2025 WL 2420390, at *3 (E.D. Cal. Aug. 21, 2025); *Padilla v. ICE*, 704 F. Supp. 3d 1163, 1171–72 (W.D.

[1] The Supreme Court's later decision in *Dep't of Homeland Sec. v. Thuraissigiam*, 591 U.S. 103 (2020), is also inapposite, because it addressed only immigrants' due process rights in deportation proceedings—i.e., the process due when noncitizens seek to stay in the country instead of being removed. *See Lopez-Arevelo v. Ripa*, No. EP-25-CV-337-KC, 2025 WL 2691828, at *7–9 (W.D. Tex. Sept. 22, 2025). It does not purport to hold that immigrants have no constitutional right to due process before the government holds them indefinitely in immigration detention. *Id.*

Wash. 2023).

II. Courts have reached different conclusions about when immigration detention becomes indefinitely prolonged, but Mr. Hongie would prevail under any standard, including the *Banda* factors.

Though courts agree that due process mandates a bond hearing when detention grows unreasonably prolonged, they disagree about how to assess whether a particular migrant's detention has reached that point. *Sanchez-Rivera v. Matuszewski*, No. 22-CV-1357-MMA (JLB), 2023 WL 139801, at *5–6 (S.D. Cal. Jan. 9, 2023) (Anello, J.) (surveying the various approaches). Because it incorporates nearly all the factors, many courts have found it "most appropriate to apply the *Banda* test to Petitioner's detention here under § 1225(b), as other courts within this district have done in the past." *Sandesh v. Noem*, 26-cv-846-JES-DDL, Dkt. 13 at 5 (Mar. 5, 2026 S.D. Cal). The *Banda* factors include:

(1) the total length of detention to date;

(2) the likely duration of future detention;

(3) the conditions of detention;

(4) delays in the removal proceedings caused by the detainee;

(5) delays in the removal proceedings cause by the government; and

(6) the likelihood that the removal proceedings will result in a final order of removal.

Banda, 385 F. Supp. 3d at 1106. Applying these factors here shows that Mr. Hongie's detention has become prolonged.

First, the "most important factor," the length of detention, favors Mr. Hongie. *Banda*, 385 F. Supp. 3d at 1118. In assessing this factor, "[i]t is important to bear in mind the context: The detention that is being examined here is the detention of a human being who has never been found to pose a danger to the community or to be likely to flee if released." *Jamal A. v. Whitaker*, 358 F. Supp. 3d 853, 859 (D. Minn. 2019). With that context, courts have granted bond

hearings for persons detained between six and eleven months. *See Alizadeh v. Mullin*, No. 26-CV-2924-JLS-MPP, ECF 9 (S.D. Cal. June 5, 2026) (granting bond hearing for petitioner detained over six months); *Fofie v. Warden Otay Mesa Detention Center*, No. 26-CV-1900-JLS-MSB, ECF 14 at 5 (S.D. Cal. May 29, 2026) (granting bond hearing for petitioner detained over six months); *Bendekaca v. Brightman*, No. 26-CV-2934-JLS-BLM, 2026 WL 1400584, at 2 (S.D. Cal. May 19, 2026) (collecting cases); *Amando v. United States Dep't of Just.*, No. 25-CV-2687-LL-DDL, 2025 WL 3079052, at *5 (S.D. Cal. Nov. 4, 2025) (collecting cases). Mr. Hongie has been detained for over 7 months—the same length of time as other petitioners who have received relief. Exh. A at ¶ 4. This factor therefore strongly favors Mr. Hongie.

Second, Mr. Hongie has reason to anticipate significant future detention, as his case is on appeal to the BIA and will possibly go to the Ninth Circuit. *Id.* at ¶ 6. All told, "[t]his process may take up to two years or longer." *Banda*, 385 F. Supp. 3d at 1119. Because "Petitioner's future detention can last several more months or even years[,]" this factor favors Mr. Hongie. *Abdul Kadir v. Larose*, No. 25CV1045-LL-MMP, 2025 WL 2932654, at *5 (S.D. Cal. Oct. 15, 2025).

Third, conditions of confinement weigh in favor of Mr. Hongie. "Petitioner's confinement at Otay Mesa Detention Center is 'indistinguishable from penal confinement.'" *Abdul Kadir*, 2025 WL 2932654, at *5 (quoting *Kydyrali*, 499 F. Supp. 3d at 773).

Fourth and fifth, Mr. Hongie nor the government have caused any unreasonable delays in his removal proceedings, so these factors are neutral.

Sixth, regarding the likelihood that the removal proceedings will result in a final order of removal, Mr. Hongie has a strong asylum claim and could likely win on appeal. Exh. A at ¶ 1. Accordingly, under the *Banda* factors, Mr. Hongie is entitled to release or a bond hearing.

CLAIM AND PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Accordingly, Petitioner respectfully requests that this Court order Respondents to provide Petitioner with a hearing and individualized bond determination at which the government shall bear the burden of establishing by clear and convincing evidence that Petitioner poses a danger or flight risk. At this hearing, the IJ should consider alternative conditions of release that could mitigate any concerns about his flight risk and, separately, if bond is deemed necessary, Petitioner's ability to pay bond. Finally, this Court should order that Respondents make the audio of the bond hearing available to Petitioner and his counsel upon request.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: July 24, 2026

s/ Hannah Pineiro Basalone

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