

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

HAMEED KHALID DARWEESH and
HAIDER SAMEER ABDULKHALEQ
ALSHAWI,

on behalf of themselves and others similarly
situated,

Petitioners,

Case No. 1:17-cv-00480

v.

DONALD TRUMP, President of the United
States; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HOMELAND SECURITY (“DHS”); U.S.
CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION
(“CBP”); JOHN KELLY, Secretary of
DHS; KEVIN K. MCALEENAN, Acting
Commissioner of CBP; and JAMES T.
MADDEN, New York Field Director, CBP.

Respondents.

DECLARATION OF NABILA ALHAFFAR

I, Nabila Alhaffar, declare, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746 and subject to penalty of perjury, that the following is true and correct:

1. My name is Nabila Alhaffar, and I am a citizen of Syria. I applied for admission to the United States at the Dulles International Airport, in Dulles, Virginia, on January 28, 2017. I applied for admission as a J-2 nonimmigrant on the basis of my J-2 visa which I received on 12/08/2015.
2. On January 27, 2017, I embarked on a flight from Doha, Qatar with a final destination of Dulles, Virginia. I traveled to the United States because I held a valid J-2 nonimmigrant visa as the derivative spouse of my husband, who is a physician in J-1 visa status. I live in Virginia with my husband.


3. Upon my arrival at Dulles, I was detained by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (“CBP”). They told me that I was being detained because my visa was “blocked” and because I am a Syrian national.
4. The CBP officers told me that I would not be permitted to enter the United States and confiscated my cell phone, visa, copy of my marriage contract, DS2019 forms, and copy of my husband’s DS2019 form which I carry with me when traveling as supporting proof for my J-2 visa.
5. One particular CBP officer told me I was going to be deported back to my home country. I explained to him that I live in the United States with my husband who was waiting for me. I asked him why my visa was being denied.
6. The officer replied: “You are not American to say that this is your home, and you cannot say ‘my visa’ because this visa belongs to the United States, not to you! You must go back to your country.”
7. I was told to sit down, have my fingerprints taken, and sign some papers.
8. The CBP officer told me that the only way I can get a new visa again without waiting for 5 years to apply again was if I signed a form to return to the country I flew from. I was shown a document I couldn’t understand because I do not read English well enough to appreciate and comprehend the legal impact of the document. I was told to sign it even without being allowed to talk to a lawyer or ask questions about what was in the document. No translator was granted to me, even though I requested one.
9. I stated I did not want to sign any papers and requested to speak with my husband, a lawyer, and a translator, before doing any such thing, and was denied all requests.
10. At that point, someone else who I assume was also a CBP officer came into the room I was in. The officer told me that I can re-apply for a new visa when I return to my country, but if I do

not sign the papers, I will be prohibited from entering the country for five years. I was told I had no viable option but to give in and sign, which is what I did.

11. The next time I saw my passport was at Dubai airport and the visa with was stamped with the word "canceled."
12. I landed at Dulles at 8:01 a.m. on January 28, 2017 and was detained until I was deported at 9:55 a.m. on a flight back to Doha, Qatar.
13. At Dubai airport I was also told that I had to pay for the plane flight home otherwise I won't be given my passport. However, upon arrival to Qatar no one asked for payment.
14. I was extremely scared and emotionally devastated. I live in the United States and didn't know when I was going to see my family again, when I was going to be able to leave detention, and if I was sent back to Qatar, when I could come back to the United States to join my husband.
15. I am currently in Qatar, my visa having been cancelled, separated from my husband who is working in the United States as a physician, not knowing when I can see my husband again.

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I hereby verify that I can write, read and understand English sufficient to set forth the information contained herein, and I further verify the above information is true and correct to the best of my information and belief. Executed this 4th day of February, 2017, at Doha, Qatar.

Dated: February 4, 2017



Nabila Alhaffar