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20 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
21 CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

22 Khanon Mahindokht Azad, et al.

23 *Petitioners,*

24 v.

25 Donald Trump, et al.

26 *Respondents.*

Case No. 2:17-cv-00706

**DECLARATION OF SARA  
YARJANI**

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28

**Declaration of Sara Yarjani**

I, Sara Yarjani, hereby declare as follows:

1. My name is Sara Yarjani. I was born on July 17, 1981. If called as a witness, I would and could competently testify to the facts stated herein, all of which are within my own personal knowledge:

2. I am a citizen of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I was born in Australia.

3. I have been a permanent resident of Austria for more than ten years.

4. Since September 2015, I have been a student at the California Institute of Human Science, pursuing a Master of Arts degree in holistic health. I only have eight months left in my two-year program and have a grade point average of 3.89.

5. I entered the United States to pursue my master's degree on September 20, 2015 on a multi-entry student visa (an F1 visa, K3813594) that expires on September 13, 2017 (in the summer of 2016, I visited family in Canada and re-entered on my student visa on September 16, 2016, just before the fall quarter began). Attached as Exhibit A is a true and correct copy of my student visa.

6. From November 21, 2016 until Friday, January 27, 2017, I spent my winter holiday traveling. I visited family and friends in Canada, Germany, France, and Austria.

7. On Friday, January 27, 2017, after transiting through Norway from Austria, I boarded a Norwegian Airlines flight from Oslo to Los Angeles LAX airport.

8. I landed at LAX airport on Norwegian Airlines flight 7081 at 8:35 pm pacific time on Friday, January 27, 2017.

9. When I arrived at passport control, the Customs and Border Protection officer there told me I needed to go to "secondary inspection." I did not know what this was, as I had never had difficulty entering the United States before. Agents had always been friendly and I had just been waived through after a short interaction at passport control.

10. I was then escorted by a CBP officer to a back room and was told to wait

1 there, along with others. There, I was asked a few questions about my citizenship,  
2 my visa, why I had left the United States, and why I was traveling to the United  
3 States. The officer also asked whether I had traveled to Iran during this trip, which  
4 I had not done, and I told him I had not.

5 11. I was then taken by a male officer through a door to another area and two  
6 female officers took me to a corridor. I was told to remove my shawl, phone,  
7 jewelry, and shoelaces and to place these items in my bag. They made me sign a  
8 form documenting the cash I had with me, and told me to put the cash in my  
9 pocket. I was then separated from my possessions. The officers then took me to a  
10 small room and proceeded to carry out a full-body pat down in an aggressive  
11 manner, as if I had done something wrong.

12 12. I was later taken to a small room with others who were waiting. The room  
13 had a big glass mirror window so that the officers could see in and we could not  
14 clearly see outside the room. At that point the few people in the room included  
15 others who I later understood were from “the EO Countries” (as they called them)  
16 and other people who were not.

17 13. After a lengthy wait, I was taken to a small room with an officer who told  
18 me, “I am your case worker.” He read a long statement from a computer screen  
19 that included a warning that if I do not provide accurate information, it will be held  
20 against me. After swearing an oath, I was asked a series of detailed questions,  
21 including about my graduate school, my parents, whether I had recently made trips  
22 to Iran, and why I was born in Australia. As I was answering, the officer was  
23 checking my answers against his computer screen. This was all done in an  
24 intimidating manner – with questions asked quickly and forcefully. Like with the  
25 aggressive pat down, it made me feel that I had done something wrong and I was  
26 being investigated, when all I was trying to do was to return and continue my  
27 graduate studies.

28 14. After the questions, the officer said that, I was not admissible to the United

1 States, but that his determination would be reviewed by his superior. And he asked  
2 me if I understood and if I had any questions. I told him I had a question and  
3 asked, “why am I not admissible to the United States when I have a valid student  
4 visa?” He said, “as of now, the visa that you had is no longer valid” and therefore I  
5 would be sent back.

6 15. The officer then said, “You now have two options. Either you comply, and  
7 agree to leave voluntarily and sign a form, or you will be forcibly removed, in  
8 which case you would face a reentry ban of one to five years or longer.” The  
9 officer was forceful and made it seem that if I did not comply, I would be violating  
10 the law. Thus, I felt I had no choice and I said that, if he was asking or telling me  
11 to do it, I will comply. I did not want to do it.

12 16. All this time, I had not been allowed the ability to call anyone, as I was  
13 separated from my phone and not allowed access to it. I was told that I would be  
14 allowed to make a call only after my interview and after all my paperwork was  
15 finished.

16 17. I was then sent back to the detention room, just before midnight on Friday,  
17 January 27, 2017.

18 18. The officer then took me to the small room where they had carried out the  
19 full-body pat down. There, the officer gave me a form “to be completed by alien  
20 when application for admission withdrawn.” This document references: “I  
21 understand that my admissibility is questioned for the above reasons, which I have  
22 read or which have been read to me in the English language.” But no reasons were  
23 listed, and the officers never explained the form to me. I was given a copy of the  
24 form and the officer escorted me back to my bag to put the copy of the form away.  
25 I know at least one other person did not receive a copy because I served as a  
26 volunteer interpreter when he signed. Attached as Exhibit B is a true and correct  
27 copy of the form I received. After I was deported and I got my documents back, I  
28 saw that they put a stamp in my passport saying “Application for admission

1 withdrawn.” Attached as Exhibit C is a true and correct copy of the page in my  
2 passport bearing the stamp.

3 19. I was then taken back to the detention room, and later to another room where  
4 officers took my fingerprints and photograph.

5 20. While I was waiting in the corridor to have my finger prints to be taken, one  
6 officer apologized and said that these were orders they had from the chief and they  
7 were just following them. He also said, “don’t worry – the visas will have to be  
8 reissued.”

9 21. At or around 12:25 am pacific time on January 28, 2017, I was allowed to  
10 make a call, and I called my sister.

11 22. At some point in the middle of the night, the officers took us to a larger  
12 room. There were nine of us, seven from “EO Countries” (I know this because at  
13 one point I heard an officer tell another officer that there were seven of us from  
14 “EO Countries”). There were cots and blankets that two people who were ill used  
15 to sleep. For some time, I was also able to use a cot as well. With the other  
16 detainees, I was in the larger detention room until early in the morning, when the  
17 officers took the nine of us to the small room, and then, later, back again to the big  
18 room.

19 23. Early in the morning, there was a shift change and at some point in the  
20 morning, they brought in apple sauce and juice because three of us told the officers  
21 that we were very hungry and asked for food.

22 24. At some point, the officers were saying that there was a flight with many  
23 people from “EO Countries” on board. I heard the officers say “we can’t mix them  
24 with the ones here” and then another officer said, referring to us, “I will take them  
25 back to the small room.” After the officers walked the other group in and sat them  
26 down on the other side of the room from us, then another officer walked us out.

27 25. When we were being held in the small room, which did not have a  
28 bathroom, if we had to go to the bathroom we had to knock on the door and then

1 were escorted to the restroom in the very first room I had been taken to, where  
2 there were restrooms. Given the way the officer was right behind you when  
3 walking, it was impossible to pause or talk to anyone else.

4 26. Being in the detention rooms, but especially the small room, made me very  
5 anxious and I had a number of anxiety attacks. It was very scary to now know what  
6 was happening and to feel like I was being punished for trying to study.

7 27. Sometime in the middle of the night, I overheard one of the officers asking a  
8 colleague what he was supposed to do with me, a student with a 3.8 GPA, with  
9 eight months left to graduate. All of this made me very anxious.

10 28. At some point, I asked officers if I could make another call. An officer took  
11 me into the small interview room at about 5:50 am and let me use my phone in the  
12 corridor for about 20 minutes. Around noon, I had asked to make another call. The  
13 officer I asked was harsh and said no, that I was not allowed to access my phone  
14 because I was in detention and I would have access to my phone only when on the  
15 plane.

16 29. At that point, all we knew is that we were going to be put on flights back and  
17 we were waiting. I kept asking officers when my flight would be and they told us  
18 that different airlines would come at different times. At around 1:00 or 2:00 pm on  
19 Saturday, February 28, 2017, the officers told me that Norwegian Airlines does not  
20 fly until late that evening or at night.

21 30. By the afternoon, I had been there for so long that the person who had been  
22 my "case worker" had gone home and was back again for his next shift. At some  
23 point, I asked him if I could make another call and I told him that my family would  
24 be worried because they did not know what was happening to me. The officer took  
25 me into the area containing our bags and let me use my phone for a few minutes at  
26 about 4:30 pm.

27 31. During that time, I was able to read messages I had received from friends  
28 and family. They told me that my family members were talking to lawyers and

1 members of the U.S. Congress on my behalf. A friend I was able to talk to on the  
2 phone told me that because people were working on my case I should ask if my  
3 removal was final. He told me that a lawyer said that if I had a valid visa, I should  
4 be able to stay and I should ask if my case was final or if there were any changes  
5 with my case. I was afraid, because I had already been forced to sign the form, but  
6 I asked the officer about the finality of my case. The officer said everything with  
7 my case was final.

8 32. At some point in the afternoon, Norwegian Airlines staff came to get my  
9 luggage and told me that my flight was scheduled to depart at 7:30 pm pacific time  
10 on Saturday, January 28, 2017.

11 33. At around 6:45 or 7:00 pm pacific time on Saturday, January 28, 2017,  
12 officers told me to get my carry-on bags. Two armed CBP officers, one in the front  
13 and one behind, took me through storage rooms and back areas in the airport. The  
14 officers also had my passport in an envelope of documents. I wasn't allowed to  
15 hold my own documents. They took me to the gate. At one point earlier, I had  
16 overhead a supervisor telling officers to avoid lawyers and the press as they were  
17 bringing other people to their flights.

18 34. Although I asked repeatedly, the officers did not allow me to use my phone  
19 while I was still in the detention area during my last hours in detention. Thus, as  
20 soon as I started walking with the officers, I asked if I could use the phone. I was  
21 not allowed to do so. When we arrived at the gate they gave my documents to the  
22 flight attendant to check me into the flight and then took me to a back area next to  
23 the boarding tunnel. They told me that I would be the last one to board the flight. I  
24 wanted to talk to the flight attendants because I had been having anxiety attacks  
25 and I wanted to ask where my seat would be – after 18 hours of travel, and nearly  
26 23 hours in detention, the thought of another 18 hours of travel made me very  
27 anxious. But the officers said that I could not talk to airline staff and just told me in  
28 a louder voice that I must follow the officers.



1 35. In the area outside the boarding gate, I was finally allowed to use my phone.  
2 I made a call to my sister and got messages that a federal judge in New York had  
3 ordered a nationwide stay of all removals. Before I was able to say anything, the  
4 officers told me I had to hang up the phone and get on the plane. At that time, I  
5 told the officer next to me, "I was just told that a federal judge has ruled and that  
6 there is a stay on the executive order and it was against the law to put me on the  
7 plane." The officer said in response, "Oh – Wowza." That was the officer's only  
8 response.

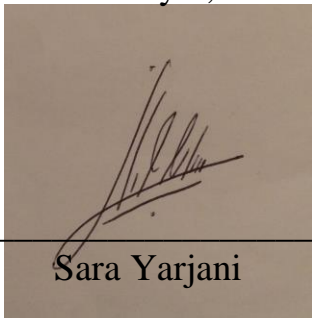
9 36. Having two armed officers telling me to do something, I felt very threatened.  
10 They marched me to the plane and gave my documents to the head flight attendant  
11 and then waited at the door of the plane until the flight attendants sat me in my  
12 seat. I just sat there crying while the flight attendants comforted me.

13 37. My flight, Norwegian Airlines flight 7092, departed the United States at  
14 7:36 pm pacific time on Saturday, January 28, 2017. A true and correct copy of my  
15 boarding passes is attached as Exhibit D.

16 38. Not long after taking off, I started having a panic attack because I was afraid  
17 I had lost my documents. I asked the flight attendants and the head flight attendant  
18 told me that they had my documents but the officers had instructed them not to  
19 give them to me until we left U.S. air space.

20 39. I was ultimately detained for nearly twenty-three hours.

21 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America  
22 that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on February 2, 2017 in Vienna  
23 Austria.

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Sara Yarjani