

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,

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.

No. 1:17-cv-00480

Respondents.

DECLARATION OF RAMEZ SNOBER

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

1. My name is Ramez Snober, and I am a citizen of the Syrian Arab Republic. I was born in Damascus, Syria on August 22, 1980. I presently live with my family in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I have lived in Saudi Arabia for twelve years. I work as a Windows-applications-development team leader at Saudi Telecom Company, and my legal sponsor, which foreigners working in Saudi Arabia are required to have, is Ejada Systems Co. Ltd. I have been employed by Ejada for four years. In Saudi Arabia I have a “resident identity” card, which expires on May 16, 2021.
2. My wife, Daniah Al Ghorani, is also a Syrian citizen. She was born in Damascus, Syria on September 21, 1987. She has been living in Saudi Arabia for twenty-nine years.
3. My wife and I have two daughters: H.S., who is six years old, and Z.S., who is three years old. Both H.S. and Z.S. are also Syrian citizens. Even though they were born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, they do not have Saudi citizenship. Neither of my daughters has ever traveled to Syria.

4. My wife and I have not returned to Syria for approximately six years, since the civil war began. We did not think it was safe to travel there.
5. On or around December 25, 2016, I applied for B-1/B-2 non-immigrant visas for myself and my three family members so we could travel to the United States for vacation. The process of obtaining a U.S. visa is very rigorous for Syrian people living in Saudi Arabia. A Syrian citizen applying for a U.S. visa must demonstrate to the Consular Officer that he has strong ties to Saudi Arabia. I was required to provide a bank statement showing a high account balance, and an introduction letter from my employer showing I earned a high salary. In the end, after meeting those requirements, we received the visas by mail on or about January 11, 2017.
6. I have traveled to the United States before. In 1986, when I was around six years old, I lived with my father, my mother, and my brother in Los Angeles, California. My father was a visiting mathematics professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. We lived in Los Angeles for eleven months, and I studied with my brother at an elementary school in Los Angeles.
7. After receiving our U.S. visas in January 2017, my family and I prepared for our vacation to Orlando, Florida to visit Disney World. My two daughters love the movie *Frozen*, and we were going to Disney World so they could meet their favorite cast of characters: Anna, Elsa, and Olaf. We also planned to visit other attractions for the children, including WonderWorks and SeaWorld. We were also planning to visit the outlets for shopping.
8. On January 28, 2017, at 6:25 AM (AST), my family and I departed from Riyadh on Saudi Arabian Airlines flight number SV37. We landed at Dulles International Airport on or around 12:20 PM (EST). We had a 5 hour 11 minute layover in Dulles until our flight left to Miami, Florida, on American Airlines flight number AA1976.
9. After we got off the plane, my family and I went to U.S. Customs and Border Protection ("CBP"). We waited in line for approximately 30 minutes. At passport control, the agent did not stamp our passports with a U.S. stamp. Instead, he marked our customs declaration form with the letter "R". We took our luggage and headed to the exit door. At the exit door, the security guard checked the declaration form and directed us to go to the right to enter a hall.
10. In the hall, a CBP officer asked me a lot of questions regarding the purpose of our visit. He asked us why we were traveling to the United States, and how long our stay would be. He also asked us about our residency in Saudi Arabia, and how long we had lived there. I explained that I had lived in Saudi Arabia for twelve years, my wife had lived in Saudi Arabia for twenty-nine years, and my two daughters were born there. I also explained that

my children had never been to Syria and that neither my wife nor I had been to Syria for six years.

11. The CBP officers then inspected our luggage. They asked how much money we were carrying, which was \$8,000. We were with the CBP officers for about an hour.
12. Afterwards, the CBP officers directed us to enter an office, where they informed us they had received an Executive Order banning travelers from seven countries, including Syria. I asked to see a copy of the Executive Order. The CBP officer pulled out his mobile phone and navigated to an online news site, which I believe was CNN. He then pulled up an article explaining the Executive Order and showed it to me.
13. I asked to see an actual copy of the order. The CBP officer left, and returned a little while later with a printed piece of paper that did not have an official header or footer. The paper had two paragraphs printed on it: the first paragraph discussed B-1 visas, and listed the seven countries that were covered; the second paragraph discussed B-2 visas, and listed only six countries—Syria was not one of them. I pointed out that Syria was not on the second list, and the CBP officers laughed and told me it was a “typo.”
14. I asked the CBP officer why they did not inform the airlines of this Executive Order before we boarded. The CBP officer replied that they had received the order Friday evening (January 27, 2017) while our airplane was in the air.
15. The CBP officer then gave us two options. The first option was to sign papers saying we wanted to withdraw our application for admission to enter the United States. We were told that CBP would cancel our visas, and we would be returned to Saudi Arabia. If we refused to sign the papers, the CBP officer said we would be “detained.” When I asked what he meant by “detained,” the CBP officer told me it meant we would be put in jail, and would be there for a longer time. The officer also told us we would then be deported later and also be prevented from entering the United States again for five years. I felt scared because of the second option. I asked him if I could contact a lawyer, and he told me I could not because I was not an American citizen.
16. My wife and I thought about the threat of the second option, and we chose to sign the papers given to us. We did not think we had a choice. This occurred around 3:00 or 3:30 PM.
17. After we signed the papers, the CBP officers seized our mobile phones. We were prevented from contacting anybody directly, from watching what was happening around us, and from reading the news. I asked to contact my father-in-law to let him know we were returning to Saudi Arabia, but the CBP officers told me I was not allowed to contact anyone. However, one of the CBP officers offered to call him for us. The officer went

into another room to make the call, and returned several minutes later to inform us he had done so.

18. My wife and two daughters were very upset because of the decision to ban us from entering the United States, and because the CBP officers were detaining us.
19. After waiting in the hall, around 4:00 PM, they took us to a big room where they were detaining families. In that room we saw families sleeping on the floor. I asked to use the restroom, which was behind a locked door connected to the main room. The CBP officer opened the bathroom door for me and locked the door after me. My daughter H.S. cried.
20. After about twenty minutes of waiting in the detention room, five or so CBP guards entered the room with a tall man. They stood in a circle around him, and began putting handcuffs on him. While they were putting on the handcuffs, two officers had their hands on their guns. My wife and my daughters noticed the guns and became very scared. My wife began hugging our children. I asked a CBP officer why they were doing that to the man. He answered, "Don't worry about it, your situation is totally different from his."
21. At approximately 5:00 PM, several CBP officers escorted us via shuttle to our gate. Two officers were in front of us and two officers were behind us on the shuttle as we traveled through the airport. The CBP guards waited with us at the gate for about 35 minutes. We were very upset and depressed.
22. We were then put on Saudi Airlines flight number SV38, which departed Dulles International Airport at 6:00 PM for Riyadh Airport (RUH) in Saudi Arabia.
23. When we returned to Saudi Arabia, we contacted my father-in-law. He said he had spoken with the CBP officer, who told him that our family would be returned to Saudi Arabia because we had incomplete documents. I knew this was not true.
24. Since we have returned, my two daughters have been very agitated. They are nervous and upset. My daughters keep saying to me: "You promised to take us to see the Frozen characters, when we will go?"
25. Exhibit A is a true and accurate copy of the Withdrawal of Application for Admission/Consular Notification form, signed by CBP Officer John Desanta, which states that pursuant to the Executive Order, my visa application was withdrawn and my visa was canceled.
26. Exhibit B is a true and accurate copy of H.S.'s visa, which states her visa was "Revoked under section 221(f) of the INA. Cancelled without prejudice."

Executed this 5th day of February, 2017, at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.



Ramez Snober

EXHIBIT A

Subject ID : [REDACTED]

Event No: WAS1701000303

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Withdrawal of Application for Admission/Consular Notification

Basis for Action (check all that apply)

SIGMA Event: 9797205

File No. A [REDACTED]

Date: 01/28/2017

- Application for Admission Withdrawn
- Visa/BCC Canceled
- VWPP Refusal
- Ordered removed (inadmissible) by Immigration Judge -Section 235(b)(2)(order attached)
- Ordered removed (inadmissible) by DHS - Section 235(b)(1)(order attached)
- Waiver revoked (212)(d)(3) (order attached)
- Departure required (8 CFR 240.25) (Form I-213 attached)

Notice to: American Consul RYADH, SAUDI ARABIA
(Location)

From: CHANTILLY, VA US 20166
(Location)

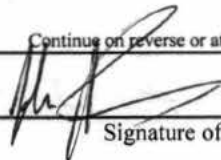
Name (FAMILY, Given, Middle) SNOBER, Ramez		
Citizenship SYRIA	Country of birth DAMASCUS, SYRIA	Date of birth 08/22/1980
Complete foreign address (Mailing Address) [REDACTED] RIYADH SAUDI ARABIA [REDACTED]		
Complete U.S. address		
Airline/Vessel of arrival Saudi Arabian Airlines Corp., Flt#: 37	Port of arrival WASHINGTON, DC	Date of arrival 01/28/2017 0957
Visa number, type L [REDACTED] B2	Date, place of visa issuance 01/09/2017, RYADH, SAUDI ARABIA	Social Security Number None
Reasons (Include all pertinent facts concerning denial of application for admission, including use of altered, counterfeit or fraudulent documents): Executive Order		

Continue on reverse or attach separate sheet as needed.

JOHN DESANTA

CBP Officer

Name and Title of Officer (Print)



Signature of Officer

EXHIBIT B

