

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA

Elias C. v. Bondi

Elias C. · No. No. 26-cv-307 (ECT/SGE) · Decided January 20, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Minnesota grants Elias C.’s habeas petition challenging his classification as subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2). The court holds that, because Elias had lived in the United States for more than two years, his detention falls under the discretionary detention provisions of 8 U.S.C. § 1226 and he is entitled to a bond hearing. Respondents are enjoined from denying him a bond hearing on the basis that § 1225(b)(2) applies.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Minnesota
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Eric C. Tostrud
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Minnesota
DECIDED	January 20, 2026
DOCKET	No. 26-cv-307 (ECT/SGE)
DISPOSITION	writ_granted
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner sought habeas relief under 28 U.S.C. § 2241, challenging his classification as subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) and seeking a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a).
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court resolved the statutory classification and habeas claim as a question of statutory interpretation and granted relief based on the pleadings and undisputed allegations.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court opinion
PARTIES	Elias C. v. Pamela Bondi, Attorney General, Kristi Noem, Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Department of Homeland Security, Todd M. Lyons, Acting Director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Sirce Owen, Acting Director for Executive Office for Immigration Review, Executive Office for Immigration Review, Samuel Olson, Acting Director, St. Paul Field Office Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Joel Brott, Sheriff of Sherburne County

TOPICS

immigration detention

statutory interpretation

due process

remedies

PRACTICE AREAS

immigration law

habeas corpus

administrative law

constitutional law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Elias C. was properly classified as subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2), rather than discretionary detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1226.
2. Whether Elias was entitled to a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a)(2)(A).
3. Whether the court had jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 to review the narrow statutory detention-classification question despite the jurisdiction-stripping provisions of 8 U.S.C. § 1252.

HOLDINGS

1. Because Elias had been living in the United States for more than two years, his detention fell under 8 U.S.C. § 1226 rather than 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2).
2. Elias was entitled to a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a)(2)(A), and respondents could not deny him a hearing on the ground that § 1225(b)(2) applied.
3. The jurisdiction-stripping provisions of 8 U.S.C. § 1252(a)(5), (b)(9), and (g) did not bar review of the narrow question whether Elias was subject to discretionary detention under § 1226 or mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2).

KEY QUOTATIONS

“As courts have explained, the former statute applies to applicants “seeking admission,” and the latter to “aliens already in the country.””

“Elias has lived in the United States for more than two years. His detention falls under § 1226 and not § 1225(b)(2).”

“For these reasons, Elias is subject to discretionary detention and entitled to a bond hearing.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Elias C., a Venezuelan citizen, entered the United States without inspection on August 9, 2023, and was charged as an alien present without admission or parole. He filed an asylum application in December 2023 and received employment authorization in June 2024. ICE detained him on December 27, 2025, despite his allegation that he had an upcoming immigration-court date, and classified him as subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2).

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Elias C. was taken into ICE custody on December 27, 2025, while removal proceedings and an asylum application were pending. He filed a § 2241 habeas petition challenging the statutory basis for his detention. The federal respondents opposed the petition by relying on the reasoning in *Avila v. Bondi*. The District of Minnesota granted the petition, declared that § 1226 rather than § 1225(b)(2) governed the detention, and ordered a bond hearing.

DISPOSITION

writ_granted

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

Respondents must provide Elias C. with a bond hearing in accordance with 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a)(2)(A) and may not deny the hearing on the basis that 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) applies.

CASES CITED

- Jose J.O.E. v. Bondi, 797 F. Supp. 3d 957, 961–62 (D. Minn. 2025)
- Jennings v. Rodriguez, 583 U.S. 281, 289 (2018)
- Francisco T. v. Bondi, 797 F. Supp. 3d 970, 974–76 (D. Minn. 2025)
- Belsai D.S. v. Bondi, No. 25-cv-3682 (KMM/EMB), 2025 WL 2802947, at *6–7 (D. Minn. Oct. 1, 2025)
- Eliseo A.A. v. Olson, No. 25-cv-3381 (JWB/DJF), 2025 WL 2886729, at *2–4 (D. Minn. Oct. 8, 2025)
- Avila v. Bondi, No. 25-cv-3741 (JRT/SGE), 2025 WL 2976539, at *5–7 (D. Minn. Oct. 21, 2025)
- Andres R.E. v. Bondi, No. 25-cv-3946 (NEB/DLM), 2025 WL 3146312, at *2–3 (D. Minn. Nov. 4, 2025)
- E.M. v. Noem, No. 25-cv-3975 (SRN/DTS), 2025 WL 3157839, at *4–8 (D. Minn. Nov. 12, 2025)
- Santos M.C. v. Olson, No. 25-cv-4264 (PJS/DJF), 2025 WL 3281787, at *2–3 (D. Minn. Nov. 25, 2025)
- Castañon-Nava v. U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Sec., 161 F.4th 1048 (7th Cir. 2025)
- Fernando F.P.D. v. Brott, No. 25-cv-4455 (ECT/ECW), 2025 WL 3675151, at *2 (D. Minn. Dec. 17, 2025)
- Matter of Yajure Hurtado, 29 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA Sept. 5, 2025)

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