

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS**

ANGELICA REBECA GONZALEZ-GARCIA, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

JEFFERSON BEAUREGARD SESSIONS III, et al.,

Defendants.

Civil Action No. \_\_\_\_\_

**AFFIDAVIT OF ANGELICA GONZALEZ-GARCIA**

1. My name is Angelica Rebeca Gonzalez-Garcia.
2. I am 31 years old. I have an eight-year old daughter, S.K., who is currently being held away from my custody in a town called Harlingen, Texas. I have not seen her since May 11, 2018 and this hurts me deeply considering we have always slept in the same bedroom since the day she was born.
3. I came to the United States via Arizona on May 9, 2018 after leaving my country on April 26, 2018.
4. My daughter and I were fleeing Guatemala for many reasons, including abuse, domestic violence and discrimination against me and, consequently, my daughter. When I felt I could no longer live safely in my country, I left Guatemala.
5. I have no family in the United States, all of my family lives in Guatemala.
6. I was previously married in Guatemala. My husband was abusive to me and he is part of the reason I fled. When I fled, I had almost completed the process of divorce but could not pay the last filing fee.

7. Shortly after entry into the United States, I was surrounded by what I now know to be Border Patrol officers.
8. Approximately three cars surrounded us. The officers instructed my daughter and me to take off our jewelry, socks and shoes and laces. We complied.
9. The officers placed my daughter and me in the back of a pick-up truck. They drove us about  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour until we reached a stopping point. More people entered the car. The Officers then switched us to another car. The second drive took about 45 minutes or so.
10. When we arrived at the second stop, I was placed in a room with windows and cement floors. My understanding is this facility was in Arizona. Approximately 30-40 women and children stayed in this room. We had one mattress that four people had to sleep on, including my daughter and me. The locked room had a toilet and walls. The toilet had a partial wall and people laying on the floor could see. My daughter felt embarrassed to pee in that room with all those people. The guards were mostly men and could monitor the room through the windows, as well as enter and exit the room with a key. Although we left with clothes in a bag, the Officers took the clothes. When we were left in the room we were told not to complain or bang on the walls because we would be there for "four days at most" and that I would then be deported.

11. On May 10, 2018, the day after our arrest, Officers came into the room and told me that they intended to take my daughter away from me. The Officers told us that the law with minors was “done” and again said I was going to be deported. Most devastating of all, the Officers said I would never see my daughter again. When the Officers told me this, I felt like collapsing and dying. I cannot express the pain and fear I felt at that point. My daughter was only seven years old and she was much too young to be taken from me. When I asked why the Officers said that I had “endangered” her by bringing her here. They told me to sign a consent form to take my daughter, but that it did not matter whether or not I signed, because they were going to take her either way.
12. The officer came into the cell and called my daughter and me into the big office space. They told me that if I did not sign the paper they would still take my daughter from me, and they also said it would be worst for me. During this same conversation one of the officers asked me “In Guatemala do they celebrate mother’s day?” When I answered yes he said, “then Happy Mother’s Day” because the next Sunday was Mother’s day. I lowered my head so that my daughter would not see the tears forming in my eyes. That particular act of cruelty astonished me then as it does now. I could not understand why they hated me so much, or wanted to hurt me so much.
13. The next morning, at five a.m., the Officers made me bathe my daughter and put oversized clothes on her, as well as put a ponytail in her hair. We were in a trailer-like vehicle with three shower stalls. My daughter and I were in one and there was another mother with her child in another stall. My body was shaking and I felt like dying. Instead, I tried to be strong for my daughter. I even remember trying to laugh so my daughter would not be scared. I told her that she did not need to cry and that it would

only be a couple of days that they would take her. I dressed her in the stall and then there was a little room where I brushed her hair.

14. We waited in that room until all of the kids had been bathed, and then they took all of us into a big office room. Then they told us that would be as far as we would go with our children and they made all of the children stand in a straight line. All of the kids were given the same jacket, pants, and oversized shirt to wear. The uniforms were dark blue but had no identifying information such as a number or facility name. The youngest child in line was about 5 years old and the oldest was about 12 years old. There were approximately 10 kids and the youngest ones were crying. My daughter looked like she wanted to cry; I held back my tears so she would not. I had no idea where they were taking her, they only told me they were going to take her to a shelter. The children were lead out of the building in a single line. All of the mothers were told to return to their cells. Only two women from my cell were separated from their children. We sat next to each other in the cell and cried together and asked God to give us strength.
15. I still cannot stop crying over this incident. Nothing can prepare a person for the pain of watching their child be forcibly removed from them. Heart wrenching and devastating are the only words I have. It is not clear that I can recover fully from this incident.
16. After they took my daughter from me, I immediately started looking for her. When I asked where they had taken my daughter, the guards told me there were many shelters and they did not know where she would end up. I put in request slips to the guards at the facility I was in and did not hear back. I was moved from that facility to another facility on May 16, 2018.

17. On May 18, 2018, I was moved to a facility in Colorado. The whole time I searched for my daughter. I cannot remember how many request slips I put in, but I recall filing many. The day I arrived to the facility in Colorado they did a medical check-up and asked me a lot of questions. I told them that I thought I was going to go crazy if I would have to be separated from my daughter for a long time. I told them I had trouble sleeping, I was crying a lot, and not eating. The next day they took me to see a psychologist. The psychologist asked me if I wanted to kill someone and I said no. Then they asked me if I was going to take my own life or hurt someone and I said no. I repeatedly told them I just wanted my daughter returned to me. I wanted to know about her and I wanted to hear her voice and know that she was okay.
18. One of the request slips I placed was on May 24, 2018. After I filed that May 24, 2018 slip, I gathered enough money to call home to Guatemala. When I called home, I learned that a shelter in Texas had called about my daughter. This was the first time I heard about my daughter's location. I believe I finally spoke to my daughter around May 26<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup>. This call gave me such joy. I was so relieved to know they had not deported my daughter.
19. Since the day she was taken away from me, I have only spoken to my daughter five times. Three times, I was allowed a video link conversation and twice by phone. The rule at the shelter is I can call Tuesdays and Saturdays. However, the phone number I have only sends me to a phone manned by a person named Julian. Sometimes, when I call, Julian does not answer. Sometimes they cannot locate my daughter. I just cannot bear the pain of never speaking with my daughter. She is my only child and I miss her terribly.



20. My daughter is not happy in this shelter. First, she just wanted to be with me. Then she told me she had been sick with both a cough and a fever. She also told me that a boy had hit her in the head and she had a bruise as a result of the assault. She also told me that she has a problem with her eye which she was told was conjunctivitis, and that because of this she is being isolated from the other children in detention.
21. My daughter's 8<sup>th</sup> birthday passed in the shelter. I could hear the pain in her voice when she told me how upset she was to spend her birthday away from me. Most often, my daughter simply asks when she is going to see me again. It breaks my heart and I don't know what to tell her.
22. One thing my daughter always asks me is "can I have pizza mommy?" I promised her, when I found her again, I would buy her a pizza all for herself.
23. After weeks in detention, I was finally able to complete asylum forms and I saw an immigration Judge on June 18, 2018 and was released the following day. I have continued to try to get my daughter back ever since I know my daughter at least takes comfort from the fact that I have been released from custody, but more than anything, she just wants to be with me. While in Jail, and still today, I have had trouble sleeping knowing my daughter could not be protected by me.
24. After I was released, I flew to Massachusetts because I had a friend from my town in Guatemala who said he would help me. My friend picked me up from the airport in Boston early in the morning on Wednesday, June 20, 2018 and brought me to Framingham, Massachusetts. In Framingham, I connected with a local advocacy organization that helped me find a lawyer and other community resources.

25. This past Friday, June 22, 2018, I was finally able to get through to someone at the shelter, but learned that the only way for S.K. to be returned to me was to submit a "reunification packet request" to the shelter in order to be qualified as a "sponsor" of my own daughter. The package was about 36 pages and someone had to help me fill it out. I am lucky that someone helped me.
26. On Sunday, June 24, 2018, an advocate from a local immigrant's rights organization obtained an attorney for me.
27. When the Attorney and I called the shelter, we were told we could not get help because "it was the weekend." This felt very frustrating to me, as my daughter and I had not seen each other in person since May 11, 2018.
28. After further calls, I have learned that in order to get my daughter back, I and every person in the house where I am staying will have to travel to New Jersey to provide fingerprints, and the government will only allow this to occur on July 16, 2018. Before they spoke to the Attorney, they told me that I could not have prints until July 31, 2018. I don't understand this because my fingerprints were taken when I was arrested at the border. We have tried to offer to send these fingerprints more quickly by sending them through organizations in Massachusetts, but those requests have been refused.
29. I feel terrible that my daughter remains alone, sick, and scared in the shelter for more weeks.
30. This delay is going to be extremely difficult for me and for my daughter, and I can't understand why the government won't recognize that I am her mother and release her to me.

31. I plan to stay in Massachusetts and hope to work to support my family once I get permission.

32. I would like my daughter to come to Massachusetts to live with me. I feel like I'm developing a support network for us here.

33. Once my daughter is in Massachusetts, I plan to enroll her in school in Framingham.

Though I worry that it will be difficult for my daughter to leave my side and feel safe at school, I want her to get an education.

34. I also will make sure she gets the care that she needs for her psychological and physical health. I need to see my daughter to determine whether she needs mental health services because of the separation. I know she has received counseling at the shelter because she was crying so much.




Signed under pains and penalties for perjury, this 26 day of June, 2018.



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ANGELICA REBECA GONZALEZ-GARCIA

I, Diego Low, certify that I am a disinterested adult competent to interpret from Spanish to English and that I interpreted the above-referenced document from English to Spanish for the above-referenced affiant.

Signed under pains and penalties for perjury, this 26 day of June, 2018.

  
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DIEGO LOW