1	IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
2	FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
3	AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES . UNION FOUNDATION .
4	Plaintiff, . Docket No. CA 17-2069
5	JAMES N. MATTIS . Washington, D.C.
6	. Thursday, January 18, 2018 Defendant
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9	TRANSCRIPT OF MOTIONS HEARING
10	BEFORE THE HONORABLE JUDGE TANYA S. CHUTKAN
11	UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE
12	APPEARANCES:
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PROCEEDINGS

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THE DEPUTY CLERK: Your Honor, this morning we have Civil Action Number 17-2069, the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation versus James N. Mattis. Will counsel for the parties please approach the lectern and identify yourselves for the record and the party that you represent.

MR. HAFETZ: Good morning, your Honor. Jonathan Hafetz for Petitioner. I'm joined by my colleagues Hina Shamsi and Dror Ladin from the ACLU National office and Art Spitzer from the ACLU for the District of Columbia.

THE COURT: Good morning.

MR. BURNHAM: Good morning, your Honor, James
Burnham here on behalf of Respondent. I'm here with Terry
Henry and Kathryn Wyer from the Justice Department.

THE COURT: Good morning. Happy New Year,
everyone. I have two new interns starting today. I just
wanted to make sure they had an opportunity to come in.

All right. Thank you for arranging to be here. I know we've had several hearings in this matter. I've ordered briefing on a relatively tight schedule given the holidays, so I appreciate everyone's hard work in trying to prepare for this matter.

I reviewed all of the pleadings. I have some questions. What I think I'll do is let the parties get to

the argument and I'll hop in as I tend to do when you reach the appropriate point. Mr. Hafetz.

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MR. HAFETZ: Good morning, your Honor, again. The motion relief sought in this motion is supported by a bedrock principle that the United States cannot transfer an American citizen from its jurisdiction, from the United States unless it is positively authorized by law.

Here respondents have provided no basis, no legal basis on which they could transfer the petitioner. And we are seeking to preserve the Court's jurisdiction so that the Court can decide this habeas challenge to the petitioner's detention. The petitioner is not seeking as respondents incorrectly claim continued custody. He's seeking release, and handover to another sovereign is not release from custody.

The cases that respondent relies principally on the Supreme Court's decision in *Munaf* and D.C. Circuit's decision in *Kiyemba II* do not support its position.

THE COURT: Let me ask you, Mr. Hafetz, and I know you know Munaf because I saw you were on the brief in that case. That case involved a handover or the government's desire to transfer the petitioner to Iraqi authorities who the, he was in the custody of multinational forces. The allegation was he had committed, petitioner had committed crimes under Iraqi law in Iraq. So if the government here

were able to demonstrate or proffer that another country to which they wish to transfer the petitioner had a legitimate interest in receiving the detainee as did Iraq in *Munaf* would this court be able to prohibit transfer of the petitioner under the circumstance?

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MR. HAFETZ: Well just to clarify, your Honor, no such basis is in the record now.

THE COURT: I don't know. I'm going to have to ask the government some questions on that, but hypothetical speaking.

MR. HAFETZ: Well, your Honor, it would need to be authorized by law. So if there were a -- in other words, it would have to be just a handover because of some claim for a desire or some -- it would have to be authorized by law. It would have to a statute or treaty. The background rule is Valentine, that is the starting point which says where the court says that any transfer to surrender of a citizen to a foreign government has to be positively granted by law.

THE COURT: I understand. What I'm asking you is if the government proffered in this case that the detainee here had allegedly committed crimes in the country to which they sought to transfer him, and that country was making a, by all appearances a legitimate request for his transfer to prosecute him on those charges, which is what was the case in *Munaf*, wouldn't I -- I mean your position would be very

different, don't you agree?

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MR. HAFETZ: I think your Honor's question there are two different parts because Munaf is different in another respect. In Munaf, you had two citizens who traveled to the country and committed crimes there. In addition, they were being held by the United States as the Supreme Court said quote as the jailer for Iraq. The United States was essentially an agent or an arm of the Iraqi criminal justice system, so it was not a -- so essentially they were hold -- and a sovereign now says it's a narrow --

of the factors certainly that the Court considered in deciding that the transfer was permitted, but as I read that case, even more important the Court's consideration was the fact that the two detainees had committed crimes in the jurisdiction in which they were being held. And had they been released would simply have been facing prosecution for those offenses, which isn't the case here as far as I know, correct?

MR. HAFETZ: That's correct. That's correct. And so essentially *Munaf* rested on the principle that a sovereign has exclusive criminal jurisdiction within its borders. Here though the petitioner was forcibly brought to Iraq. And there's --

THE COURT: All I know, all I have in the record

was that, and this is based on what the government has put in their papers, is that he was turned over to U.S. forces by I believe Syrian armed forces. I'm not even sure. I may not be stating correctly. He was turned over to U.S. forces.

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What if the government, and again this is a hypothetical, but if the government asserts that they're seeking to transfer him to a country in which he is alleged to have committed crimes, does that change your analysis?

Does that change what I have to do? I mean, does that make my job clearer?

MR. HAFETZ: So if hypothetically, and none of this is in the record. The government is opposing a transfer without, sorry, is opposing a restriction on transfer without any lawful basis. But hypothetically let's say that a person he was, the petitioner was accused of committing crimes in say France, okay, hypothetically right. And France had charged him, which was the situation in Munaf, where we have criminal proceedings. France had formally submitted a request to prosecute him for crimes committed within its jurisdiction. The Court at that point would evaluate whether there was a lawful basis to extradite or transfer the person. And if there was, the case would be, that would be the issue.

But here there has to be a lawful basis. You

can't just simply take an American citizen and hand him over
to a foreign jurisdiction absent some authorization by
statute or by treaty that authorizes the transfer.

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THE COURT: Is your argument that, that the, any transferring sovereign or jurisdiction would have to have — there would have to have been a crime committed? Or is any legitimate interest in receiving the detainee enough?

MR. HAFETZ: No, it would have to be a legal basis. It would have to be for simply to a, to a criminal charge, which is the situation in *Munaf*. Because remember, your Honor, the government basically — they rely on their wartime authority to transfer him as an enemy combatant. The entire question in dispute here, the merits question is whether he is or is not properly detained as an enemy combatant. If he's not detained as an enemy combatant the remedy is release.

This is different than Munaf because in Munaf release would have been as your Honor pointed out he would have been picked up by the Iraqis because he was facing proceedings in Iraq. Here release is freedom, and that is the difference. And so we're only asking for relief.

Also on *Munaf* just --

THE COURT: I think it needs to be made clear that's not what you're asking for today. What you're asking for today is the preservation of the status quo until his

petition for release can be ruled on, correct?

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MR. HAFETZ: Correct, correct. And if the government were to come forward with a lawful basis for transfer, say something like your Honor of a person extradition request the court can evaluate it at this point. But at this point we're merely seeking a restriction on a unauthorized, lawless handover to another sovereign. The government has to come forward with some kind of basis to, a lawful basis to transfer.

Even in *Munaf* there was review of the transfer decision. And your Honor, just to sharpen the *Munaf* point, because it's not entirely clear from the Supreme Court's decision but as you might familiar case and also with the lower court's decisions. In both cases the individuals were detained by the MNF-1, the international force on behalf of Iraq because of the threat they posed to Iraq having entered the country. They were -- Iraq initiated criminal proceedings against those individuals.

There was refer of charges for Omar one of the petitioners. And in *Munaf*, proceedings were underway.

There'd been multiple court hearings. And then, only then the habeas petitions were filed seeking to enjoin the transfer. Here you have a situation where the United States is, there are no proceedings, although the United States has simply detained this individual as an enemy combatant. And

he's seeking release. As the Court said -- sorry, respondent acknowledges in *Munaf* the petitioners were not seeking release and that's the remedy in habeas.

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THE COURT: I'll let you continue, Mr. Hafetz.

MR. HAFETZ: Well, I want to, unless your Honor has more questions on Munaf I just want to address Kemba II, which is the other case that the government relies principally on. That case addressed as the DC Circuit said the transfer of wartime alien detainees. So these individuals had no right to enter the United States because they were noncitizens, and thus there was no possibility of release. The remedy in habeas.

And so consistent with longtime historical practice when there were individuals who were in the United States no longer regarded as enemy combatants the practice is transfer to their home country or to a safe third country. Here, this is a United States citizen with a right to return to the United States should he choose. And when citizens are released from unlawful executive detention the result is not repatriation or transfer but release from custody.

THE COURT: I want to go back to Munaf for a minute as well as \*\*\*Kemba. The Supreme Court recognized in Munaf that courts have traditionally been reluctant to intrude on the authority of the executive in military and

national security affairs and I share that hesitancy. I would rather not. That's not my lane. And I'd rather not interfere in those workings, but why should I do so here?

MR. HAFETZ: Well --

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petition for habeas corpus, but habeas corpus was not traditionally used in military matters. And this is a case where an individual designated as an enemy combatant by the United States has been held overseas as a, and has been questioned for I assume law enforcement — well, no longer a question for law enforcement but being questioned for military purposes, and they seek his transfer for some strategic, military strategic reason which I am not party to. Why should I start telling the U.S. military where they can move prisoners? Where they can move prisoners to and from?

MR. HAFETZ: So --

THE COURT: I recognize it's a large question. I am, you know, the courts and I, but the courts are truly reluctant to weigh in to these areas. And I am cautioned by the Supreme Court's reminder that we should only do so in extraordinary circumstances.

MR. HAFETZ: Let me address your question first at the broader level. I respectfully, your Honor, disagree when it comes to the rights of United States citizens.

These cases are not directly on point because they raise different issues, but they get exactly your Honor's question. One of the most celebrated cases in the United States history ex parte Milligan dealt with the, a military matter, the military trial of a United States citizen. And the Supreme Court by the Lincoln administration and the Supreme Court invalidated that and issued some of the most I think important language about the importance of the Bill of Rights for American citizens.

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Ex parte Quirin another case which while on the merits upheld the recent military commission on those facts. The Supreme Court intervened promptly, heard two days of argument on an emergency session because the case involved the trial of an American citizen. I'm going to come to Munaf in a second, but I just want to, you know, it's the notion that when we're talking about the rights of American citizens and military you know the Supreme Court has not been reluctant to interfere.

THE COURT: I don't dispute for a minute that I don't have the authority here, or that habeas doesn't apply to U.S. citizens held by the U.S. military. They're in the detention of the government and obviously does. I think the concern that I have is as I've expressed in other cases where traditionally executive functions are involved, which I am reluctant to get down to a very granule level in

deciding who goes where and what visas are issued. I mean it's not a traditional role of the courts to make those kinds of decisions, and I'm always very caution about getting down to that level where you can transfer people and what you can do with them who are in the custody of the military.

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MR. HAFETZ: Let me respond with just a couple of additional points focused on this case. In *Munaf* which is the closest case in some regards not as we say on the transfer question, but on the fact of the court's exercise of habeas jurisdiction. In *Munaf*, the Supreme Court was unanimous saying the court had habeas jurisdiction in a case that was frankly ten times more complicated as a jurisdictional matter because the petitioner, petitioners in that case were being held by an international force. And what Chief Justice Roberts said is as long as the United States holds the keys to the jailhouse for an American citizen this court has habeas jurisdiction.

Then, your Honor, Hamdi, some of those same arguments were made by the government in Hamdi, a case of an American citizen, arguments by the government that courts should not second guess the executive, not be in the business of reviewing detentions during wartime even of American citizens. And the Supreme Court rejected that very clearly in saying that the United States citizen has a right

to due process, and that even a state of war is not a blank check when it comes to the rights of American citizens.

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And so this is not a question of micromanagement or what U.S. facility this person might be under. For example, if the government proposed to transfer him to a different U.S. facility where they've held other prisoners, for example, in the United States the Court would retain its habeas jurisdiction under arguendo, but that would be the type of sort of micromanagement. Here we're talking about a lawless handover without any legal basis to a foreign country. Again, the Supreme Court was clear in Valentine.

THE COURT: Slow down a little bit.

MR. HAFETZ: So it would a lawless — here what the government is seeking is an unrestricted blank check to terminate this challenge to detention and hand over a citizen to another government or country without any kind of review, and without needing to show any lawful basis. And there's nothing in the record that suggests there's any legal basis for this transfer. This is not a case where he committed — this is not Munaf. And this is not a case where he's been confirmed to be an enemy combatant.

THE COURT: Yeah, I agree with you that the record is sparse here, but I'll have some questions for the government on that. Let you get back to your argument on Kemba. I think I interrupted you when you had moved there.

And if not, I do have some questions on your response to the government's All Writs Act argument.

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MR. HAFETZ: Sure. I don't have much more to say on Kemba. Just again the main points being that these were wartime alien detainees to quote the DC Circuit, who had no right to enter the United States and could not be released.

So in a sense there's a parallel here with Munaf. The release was not a remedy in either of those cases. In Munaf it wasn't a remedy because the sovereign on whose territory the citizens had voluntarily entered and allegedly committed crimes that sovereign was prosecuting those citizens for crimes committed on its territory. So the release, they were essentially seeking release, but to be sheltered.

THE COURT: Right. Release would have been a friction. Release would have meant immediate prosecution.

MR. HAFETZ: Right, and the same for Kemba.

There's no, release was not possible. They were being held in a military base in Guantanamo. Release on Guantanamo was not possible, and there was no right of release into the U.S. as alien wartime detainees as the D.C. Circuit said.

So transfer to another country was the only possible remedy.

Here release is a remedy. The government could open the jailhouse doors tomorrow and let this American citizen who has, there's no basis to detain we argue, free.

And that simply is the essential remedy on habeas. There's nothing in *Munaf* or *Kiyemba* that suggests that this court can't maintain its jurisdiction to ensure the citizen who has been locked up for over four months now has a right to

THE COURT: All right.

be released from custody.

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argument.

MR. HAFETZ: If you have a few questions on that?

THE COURT: I noticed that you did not respond to the government's argument unless I missed to their All Writs

MR. HAFETZ: So, your Honor, we agree that under DC Circuit law on the Winter factors apply. We've explained why. We've shown a likelihood of success as well as why the other factors of irreparable harm, and the balance of the equities weigh strongly in our favor. The All Writs Act however reinforces this Court's authority to enter the requested of relief in light of the showing that we've made on the Winter preliminary injunction factors.

THE COURT: All right.

Thank you, Mr. Hafetz. Give me one moment. I'm sorry.

MR. BURNHAM: Thank you, your Honor, good morning.

My name is James Burnham again here on behalf of the

respondent. Petitioner in this case is a citizen of the

United States. He's also a citizen of Saudi Arabia. He's a

dual national, who is here today because of his voluntary decision to travel Syria where he was ultimately captured by the Syrian democratic forces in ISIL controlled territory.

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Because petitioner hold U.S. citizenship the Syrian democratic forces did turn him over to American forces stationed in the country of Iraq. The United States military is currently holding petitioner at a location in Iraq, though the specific location of which is classified. As the Court knows the petitioner is seeking a preliminary injunction enjoining the United States from relinquishing custody of him to another country with the legitimate interest in taking that custody.

THE COURT: Let me stop you right there.

MR. BURNHAM: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: You made a statement that I haven't seen any support for in the record which is that the petitioner seek to prevent a transfer to a country with the legitimate interest in him. What is there in the record — I mean other than your statement here what is there in the record to support that statement?

MR. BURNHAM: Well, your Honor, it's in the record that he was captured in Syria in ISIL controlled territory.

And it's in the record that he's currently being held in the nation of Iraq. I would say that Iraq at the very least --

THE COURT: Yes. We don't even know, we don't

- 1 have anything in the record that says what country the
- 2 | United States is seeking to transfer him to, so your
- 3 | statement they're seeking to transfer him to a legitimate
- 4 interest in his transfer tells me nothing.
- 5 MR. BURNHAM: Respectfully, your Honor, it's not
- 6 our burden to tell you what country he's going to. It's
- 7 | petitioner's burden to --
- 8 THE COURT: Right, but you still have to proffer
- 9 what the legitimate interest is.
- MR. BURNHAM: No, we don't, your Honor. There's
- 11 | no legal requirement that the United States proffer anything
- 12 | to defeat a preliminary injunction when it's the
- 13 petitioner's burden.
- 14 THE COURT: Okay. Wait a minute. Slow right down
- 15 | here. The government holds the key to the petitioner's jail
- 16 cell.
- 17 MR. BURNHAM: Yes.
- THE COURT: In fact, until I ordered the ACLU to
- 19 have access to the petitioner, the ACLU is prevented from
- 20 | even learning the detainee's name. We certainly don't know
- 21 | where he's being held because that's a legitimately
- 22 | classified information, and no one would argue that it
- 23 | wasn't. I haven't heard anyone argue that it wasn't and I
- 24 | certainly wouldn't find that.
- 25 However, if what you're seeking to do is to

transfer the petitioner to another unnamed country, which would serve to defeat or make meaningless his petition for habeas corpus over which this Court has jurisdiction, are you saying that the ACLU somehow has the burden to determine what that country is and what their legitimate interest is?

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MR. BURNHAM: No, it's not, your Honor.

THE COURT: So is it then your position that all you have to say is we're transferring him to a country with a legitimate interest and that should suffice to meet the burden set forth under *Munaf*?

MR. BURNHAM: Respectfully, your Honor, under

Munaf the government didn't have to carry a burden at all.

If I could --

THE COURT: No. My question is in Munaf the record before the Court was that the petitioners had committed, allegedly committed crimes in the jurisdiction in which they were being held, that if they were released in that country they would be prosecuted, that country sought to prosecute them for the crimes for which they had allegedly committed in that country.

So the record was far more complete than it is here. There wasn't a ruling either way as to what the government was required to show or not because the record was far more fulsome than it is in this case. And so my question to you again is, is it your position that you do

not have to provide any further information other than to

state that the transfer country has a legitimate interest in

the detainee?

MR. BURNHAM: So, your Honor, again that's why I think you have to read *Munaf* in conjunction with *Kiyemba II*.

THE COURT: I have.

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MR. BURNHAM: I understand. And Kiyemba II itself says, your Honor, that Munaf, and this is a quote from the D.C. Circuit's decision, "Precludes a Court of issuing a writ of habeas corpus to prevent a transfer on either the grounds that the petitioner in the case would be subjected to further detection or torture." Now my friend has distinguished that case on the ground that it doesn't involve U.S. citizens, but the DC Circuit said that doesn't matter.

THE COURT: But again, the ACLU here has distinguished both *Munaf* and *Kiyemba* on their facts which is *Munaf* involved detainees who had been charged with crimes in the country in which they were being held. And *Kiyemba* involved noncitizens who could not have been released in the United States.

MR. BURNHAM: Your Honor, I understand that factual distinction, but the D.C. Circuit held that distinction doesn't matter. If I can just read it to your Honor. The court assumed arguendo these alien detainees

have quote, "The same constitutional rights with respect to
their proposed transfer as did the U.S. citizens in Munaf."

And so in that case the court said the District Courts

cannot enjoin transfer to another country because that is
equivalent to release which the relinquishment of custody

from the United States government and U.S. military.

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THE COURT: It doesn't say that it can't do that in all circumstances. I read that footnote. I read both cases and the DC Circuit's opinion. And in nowhere does it say the Court is precluded from enjoining transfer in every circumstance. That's why we're here.

MR. BURNHAM: No, your Honor, actually it said that the Court is precluded from enjoining transfer on two bases. One that the petitioner will be continued to be detained in the other country, and two that he'll be subjected to torture --

THE COURT: And the ACLU has not made any of those arguments here.

MR. BURNHAM: The only other argument I think the ACLU has made, your Honor, is the same argument they made in *Munaf* which is that the court should enjoin transfer to preserve its jurisdiction which is something the Supreme Court unanimously rejected in *Munaf*. If I could --

THE COURT: As I see it and Mr. Hafetz is going to, I'm sorry, will make his own argument when he stands up.

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     What you're proposing would allow the government in every
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     case of a United States being held by the government where
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     there's been a petition for habeas corpus to be filed.
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     government would be allowed to do an end run on every single
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    petition by simply moving the detainee to another country,
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     and saying we can't tell you what it is, but they've got a
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     legitimate interest in his transfer.
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               I'm certainly -- are you saying that that's
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     doable?
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               MR. BURNHAM: No, your Honor. What I'm saying,
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    your Honor, is the remedy for habeas corpus is release from
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     U.S. custody. And that --
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               THE COURT: Wait, maybe we need to go back.
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     You're not challenging that the detainee here is in U.S.
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     custody?
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               MR. BURNHAM: Of course not, your Honor.
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     was going to say is that when the United States relinquishes
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     custody of an individual into the bona fide custody of
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     another country he's no longer under our control. And
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     there's no --
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               THE COURT: What's different here there's a
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    petition for habeas corpus over which you agree with me I
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     appropriately have jurisdiction?
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               MR. BURNHAM: Oh, of course. Absolutely.
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THE COURT: So it is your position that during the

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pendency of a petition for habeas corpus before a Court that is pending the government can simply moot that petition or do an end run around that petition by simply transferring the detainee, a United States citizen, to another country and saying they have a legitimate interest? Wouldn't that always give the government a way to evade habeas review?

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MR. BURNHAM: Your Honor, it's not evading habeas review to grant the petitioner the relief he's seeking. The relief he's seeking is release from U.S. custody. So if the United States releases the petitioner which is what a -- but, your Honor, that's what a transfer is. And if another sovereign took control of him. Let's say the Iraqis arrested outside of the facility where he's currently being held after we opened the door he would have no right to habeas corpus in the United States.

THE COURT: I doubt very strongly that Mr. Hafetz is going to stand up and say that the relief that they seek on behalf of the detainee is for him to be released to Saudi Arabia.

MR. BURNHAM: Well, your Honor, I have no idea what Mr. Hafetz is going to say. But it sounds like what he's going to say the relief he seeks is what the Court in Munaf said they cannot get, which is for the United States to quote smuggle him out of Iraq. In this case, Mr. Hafetz I assume will ask that petitioner be brought to the United

States. If all that he's asking is that he be released from
the facility in Iraq then as soon as he's recessed from U.S.

custody the Court would lose jurisdiction and whether the

Saudis take custody of him, the Iraqis or the Syrian

democratic forces the habeas case would be gone.

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THE COURT: That's a very literal reading of release, don't you think? I mean is what you're saying if I ordered -- say I considered his petition for habeas corpus found that it was merited and ordered his release then is it your position that the government simply has to open the door of the facilities in which he's being detained in Iraq and let him walk out the door?

MR. BURNHAM: Your Honor, I haven't thought about the mechanics of that. But I think if the Court ordered us

THE COURT: It seems to me that's what you are saying. Release in this case would simply mean opening the door and letting in the first person who could grab him and take him.

MR. BURNHAM: Your Honor, I guess I'm not trying to make it so literally. I guess I'm trying to make a conceptual point, release from U.S. custody and that's what relinquishment of custody to another country is. And that's why I think Kiyemba II said everything in the opinion applies equally to U.S. citizens as it does to foreign

nationals. That's where the D.C. Circuit I think made that

point. Because the central holding of *Munaf* was that habeas

corpus provides release. It doesn't provide a vehicle to

retain custody to have a habeas ruling about release later.

5 It just provides you to be released from U.S. custody.

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THE COURT: You're saying then, Mr. Burnham, that if the government were to turn over the detainee to Saudi Arabia that would be the relief that the ACLU seeks for him, his release from U.S. custody?

MR. BURNHAM: If we hypothetically relinquished custody of petitioner to the nation of Saudi Arabia, a nation in which he is a citizen that would be complete relief in a habeas proceeding, seeking release from U.S. custody. As long as your Honor the relinquishment of custody was total. So I think it's a different case certainly if the United States is still in control if we're still calling the plays.

In other words, as Mr. Hafetz put it I think if we still control the keys to the jailhouse door I do think that would be a different case. And there would be a typical question about whether this court still has jurisdiction over him. Because in effect he would still be held by the United States even if it was in another country, but that's not what we're contemplating here. What we're talking about here I think is a complete surrender of U.S. custody for

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     disposition according to the laws and policies of another
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     country which I think is exactly what the Court was talking
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     about in Munaf.
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               Just to drill down a little on the distinctions
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     that have been offered from Munaf. The petitioners in Munaf
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    had been subjected to no U.S. judicial proceedings
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     whatsoever. They had not been designated enemy combatants
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    by a U.S. court. They had not had a U.S. court find that
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     there was a factual basis for their detention.
                                                     They had
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     only been given some executive branch process internally.
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               THE COURT: Mr. Burnham, is the petitioner in this
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     case facing criminal charges in another country?
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               MR. BURNHAM: Not to my knowledge, your Honor.
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               THE COURT: Is there an ongoing criminal
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    proceeding taking place in another country?
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               MR. BURNHAM: Not to my knowledge, your Honor,
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    but I'm not sure why it would matter.
               THE COURT: Is the United States government
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    holding the petitioner on behalf of a foreign government?
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               MR. BURNHAM: I can't answer that.
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               THE COURT: Wait you said you can't answer that.
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               MR. BURNHAM: I just don't know, your Honor. I
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     don't mean to be coy. I don't, as far as I know, no, but I
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     can't.
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THE COURT: In Munaf those were all conditions

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that were present. In *Munaf* the petitioners were facing criminal charges in another country. There was an ongoing criminal proceeding taking place in another country, I think. Why would *Munaf* bar this Court from prohibiting a transfer of petitioner even though none of these circumstances are present in *Munaf* or present here?

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MR. BURNHAM: It's not about what facts were present in *Munaf*. It's about what the Supreme Court held.

And what the Supreme Court held was that habeas is a remedy for unlawful detention the remedy for which is release. And I think that's why the court has to read Munaf in conjunction with *Kiyemba II* because I think *Kiyemba II* is much more categorical about what *Munaf* means. And this is just another quote that decision. Quote, "The District Court may not issue a habeas corpus to shield a detainee from detention at the hands of another sovereign on its soil and under its authority." And that's at page 516 of the D.C. Circuit's opinion in *Kiyemba II*.

Another quote from the D.C. Circuit's opinion, "To the extent the detainee seek to enjoin their transfer based upon the expectation that a recipient country will detain or prosecute them *Munaf* bars release." And that's on page 515 here. And so I just think when you --

THE COURT: That's not the argument here. There's no argument the ACLU has not made the argument that the

country to which the United States seeks to transfer, and in this case the government concedes it's Saudi Arabia.

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MR. BURNHAM: I have not said that, your Honor.

It's just a hypothetical. I was speaking hypothetically about countries that may have had a legitimate interest in petitioner. If I misspoke I apologize.

THE COURT: The government agrees he's a citizen of --

MR. BURNHAM: Oh yes, your Honor, I definitely meant to say that. I just didn't mean to suggests, I'm telling you what our intentions are.

THE COURT: No one has made the argument on behalf of petitioner that I have read or heard that the petitioner should not be transferred because he would be tortured or for any other reason. They're simply saying he shouldn't be transferred during the pendency of this petition for habeas corpus. As I understand it what the ACLU seeks here is not an open ended you can't move him anywhere ever, but to release him to the United States. What the ACLU seeks is a stay or an order staying any transfer until this Court has had an opportunity to rule on his petition.

MR. BURNHAM: I think in that respect their case is much weaker than the petitioners had in *Munaf*. At least in *Munaf* and *Kiyemba* they were making an argument about why transfer would be adverse to their interest. They would be

continued to be detained or they would be tortured or
something bad would happen. Petitioner hasn't even done
that.

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THE COURT: Why should they? In other words, why is it not enough to want a ruling on their petition for habeas corpus to prevent the government from simply mooting or doing an end run or somehow evading review?

MR. BURNHAM: I guess I'm confused by that, your Honor. Because the mechanism by which we would evade review is by providing complete relief. And so --

THE COURT: I guess if your position is by transferring him to another sovereign nation you're providing petitioner with complete relief. If that's your argument then certainly yes, you're giving the petitioner complete relief. I somehow suspect that Mr. Hafetz is going to stand up and take a different prospective on whether that constitutes complete relief.

MR. BURNHAM: But that's not my position, your Honor, that's the position of the amicus Supreme Court in Munaf. I'm quoting from the Court's opinion, "Habeas at its core is a remedy for unlawful detention." Another quote, "The typical remedy for such detention is of course release."

THE COURT: For a U.S. citizen.

MR. BURNHAM: Yes.

THE COURT: Relief for a U.S. citizen would be release to the United States.

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MR. BURNHAM: Your Honor, they were U.S. citizens in *Munaf*, and the Supreme Court said it was complete relief to release them to Iraq.

THE COURT: What you are doing, Mr. Burnham, is you are picking and choosing nuggets. It's not that you're reading them in conjunction. You are picking and choosing nuggets from each of those cases which suit your argument. But the fact of the matter is that release in *Munaf* would have been a completely different thing from release here. Because release in *Munaf* would have meant immediate prosecution by Iraqi authorities. It could have been nothing else.

Release in this case as I said taking a very literal reading which means that they open the detention facility and whoever can take this man takes him. But if release of a U.S. citizen in the traditional habeas sense is to apply to this case release would mean the transfer of this petitioner to the United States. And is it your position that's wrong?

MR. BURNHAM: Yes.

THE COURT: And that is because you'd have to physically transport him to the United States?

MR. BURNHAM: No, your Honor, my position is that

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that's wrong because all that the habeas right provides is
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     relinquishment of United States custody. And so whether
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     that's relinquishment to the custody of Saudi Arabia or Iraq
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     or the Syrian democratic forces --
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               THE COURT: Do you have a single case that says
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    that?
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               MR. BURNHAM: Yes, of course, Kiyemba II. Kiyemba
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     II says that the --
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               THE COURT: Kiyemba II did not involve the
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     detention of United States citizens, so naturally it
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     couldn't provide relief to the United States.
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     noncitizen combatants could not have been released to the
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     United States. It was an illegal impossibility. So Kiyemba
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     does not provide the support which you seek. Kiyemba is not
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     a case that says habeas relief for a United States citizen
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     is just relief from custody. It doesn't have to be the
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     United States. In Kiyemba could not have been to the United
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     States.
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               MR. BURNHAM: I understand the facts of Kiyemba,
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    but the D.C. Circuit said that that fact didn't matter. So
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    the D.C. Circuit held that its opinion was equally
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     applicable to U.S. citizens as it was to foreign nationals.
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               THE COURT: Did you make this argument in your
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MR. BURNHAM: I believe so. It's Footnote IV of

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brief?

the Court's decision. We certainly rely on the Court's decision extensively. And this case involves a U.S.

3 citizen.

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THE COURT: Did you make this argument in your opposition to petitioner's argument?

MR. BURNHAM: Of course we did, your Honor. We cited Kiyemba II, and we said that Kiyemba II applies Munaf, and that Kiyemba II makes clear petitioner's argument is meritless. I don't recall if we cited Footnote IV of Kiyemba II, but I certainly make the argument that Kiyemba II applies to U.S. citizens like petitioner. And in Footnote IV of the D.C. Circuit explains in very clear terms.

THE COURT: Can you direct me to the page in which you say that release from custody in the habeas sense just means release from custody and not release to the United States?

MR. BURNHAM: It's on page 1, your Honor, carrying over to page 2. Quote, "The remedy that habeas corpus furnishes is release from custody of the United States government. It is not a device for requiring continued custody by that government or preventing release by that government to another sovereign with a legitimate interest."

THE COURT: But that does not -- I see it here.

And that's where you're saying is your argument that by

transferring the petitioner to another country would be granting the habeas relief that he seeks?

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MR. BURNHAM: I wouldn't put it quite like that, but yes, I think it's the same thing. It's conceptually the same thing that he would be released from U.S. custody which is the purpose of this proceeding which is to decide whether the United States has a legal and factual basis to continue its custody of petitioner. And so I think that relinquishing custody to another country would be complete relief.

We've talked about this some. So the DC Circuit in the, one of the two cases that became Munaf this case is called Omar made the same point that we've talked about today, which was that the Court should be able to enjoin transfer to preserve its own jurisdiction over the habeas petition because the petitioner in Omar had made the same argument petitioner is making here, which is the United States cannot lawfully hold me, and therefore, I have a right to habeas relief here in the United States District Court. And the Court should preserve its jurisdiction rather than allow the United States to turn me over to the Iraqis.

And as you said with the review with the case.

The D.C. Circuit said, and I'm quoting from its opinion that was reversed in *Munaf*. "The petitioner sought an injunction

prohibiting his transfer to Iraqi authorities in order to preserve the District Court's jurisdiction to entertain his habeas petition." And that's at *Omar versus Harvey*, 479 F.3rd 1 at page 11.

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THE COURT: What's your response to the argument that any transfer would be lawless absent a valid extradition request, or some other legal justification? Why shouldn't the government be required to file an extradition request prior to transferring the petitioner?

MR. BURNHAM: Your Honor, I heard Mr. Hafetz make that argument, and it was interesting because it's literally the same argument he made in *Munaf*. I'm quoting from the Supreme Court --

THE COURT: Munaf was different. There was no need for an extradition request in Munaf because the detainees were already in Iraq. Nobody was seeking to extradite them anywhere, and they were in the custody of multinational forces. And the issue is whether they should be released -- whether Iraqi authorities should be allowed to prosecute them after they're released from the custody of multinational forces. There would be no need for an extradition request in Munaf.

MR. BURNHAM: Right, but there's not a need for one here because petitioner is not being held in the United States.

1 THE COURT: Why hasn't there been an extradition 2 request from the country to which you seek to transfer him? 3 MR. BURNHAM: Because he's not being held in the 4 United States. And so what the Supreme Court held in Munaf 5 6 THE COURT: He's being held in the custody of the 7 United States. U.S. forces are holding him. 8 MR. BURNHAM: I know. Certainly your Honor. 9 the Court said in Munaf was that it's not extradition when 10 you're being held by the military in a foreign country. Very clear. 11 12 THE COURT: Can you articulate to me any prejudice 13 the United States government would suffer as a result of a 14 temporary injunction on -- I don't mean temporary injunction 15 because that's, I don't want to use a legal term of art. If 16 the government is precluded from transferring the detainee 17 for the pendency of his habeas petition, not indefinitely 18 but for the pendency of his habeas petition, what prejudice 19 does the government suffer? 20 MR. BURNHAM: Your Honor, we would suffer immense 21 prejudice. Petitioner is a dual national of two countries, 2.2 captured in Syria by the Syrian democratic forces --23 THE COURT: What's the prejudice? 24 MR. BURNHAM: Oh, the prejudice would be to our

international relations with all the countries with an

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interest in this person. The war against ISIL is a pretty
broad conflict involving a lot of nations --

THE COURT: Stop, I'm not trying to get into geopolitical realities here.

MR. BURNHAM: Oh.

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THE COURT: But articulated interest other than it would be bad. I don't know what the countries are that have an interest in this detainee. I don't know what his value is and certainly that may be a matter of classified information. But if the government is asking, if the government is opposing a temporary holding of the status quo. In other words, if the government is opposing a transfer for a limited period of time can you articulate why the government would be prejudiced if that transfer were not allowed to go forward?

MR. BURNHAM: If your Honor would permit let me answer in two steps. I think in sort of the abstract there is a serious harm to our relations with other countries when the -- let me be more specific because I think I get, that one is not moving your Honor.

THE COURT: I rather not have the abstract.

MR. BURNHAM: How about this, the government would be happy to by I hope by end of day if not tomorrow provide ex parte and under seal a classified declaration explaining to the Court to reassure the Court kind of what we're

- 1 | thinking about with, as to petitioner.
- 2 THE COURT: I would welcome that.
- 3 MR. BURNHAM: Okay.
- THE COURT: But you know it's got to be more
- 5 | than -- it's got to be specific.
- 6 MR. BURNHAM: I understand, your Honor. I think
- 7 | you can anticipate my abstract answer, but I'm hoping we can
- 8 provide you something a little more satisfying if we're
- 9 allowed to be more specific.
- THE COURT: Why shouldn't that information be
- 11 | provided to petitioner's counsel under seal?
- MR. BURNHAM: Well, for one it's classified. I
- 13 have to talk -- maybe we could. I'd have to talk my
- 14 colleagues.
- 15 THE COURT: I would be more comfortable with that.
- 16 | They're his arguments. They obviously can't make arguments
- on his behalf if they're not given information as to the
- 18 government's position. But given that I find this, the
- 19 record in this case is sparse and it's not sparse because of
- 20 | the ACLU's efforts. It's sparse because I've been given
- 21 | limited information about this detainee. And I understand
- 22 | there are always national security and military intelligence
- 23 reasons for not wanting to reveal information, but we are
- 24 | talking about a United States citizen who does have rights.
- So yes, I would, whatever additional information

you're inclined to provide I would prefer that it be under seal and provided to his lawyers. I would require that information by the end of the today.

MR. BURNHAM: We'll do everything we can, your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you.

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MR. BURNHAM: Thank you.

THE COURT: Mr. Hafetz.

MR. HAFETZ: Your Honor, first just to state clearly we would oppose any filing that's ex parte. If the government wants to file under seal it can so do, but we're talking about the liberty of an American citizen here. The liberty of his detention and the liberty of his handover rendition based on some vague assertions and unspecified assertions of interest elsewhere, so I think we have an absolute right as a matter of due process to be able to see what that information is.

THE COURT: Mr. Burnham, you can redact to the extent you can redact any information with any document to render the, you know, to deal with the issue of classification I would appreciate that, but I think Mr. Hafetz does have a point. I would appreciate your attempts in that regard.

MR. BURNHAM: We will do everything we can.

THE COURT: All right.

MR. HAFETZ: Counsel, I do and one of my co-counsel have security clearance so if it's classified that's not a basis to keep it from us.

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Your Honor, whatever the government files just so your Honor understands you know our position on the framework. Under Valentine there is no executive discretion quoting the decision, to surrender a U.S. citizen to a foreign government unless that discretion is granted by law, so there has to be a legal basis. And the DC Circuit in the case the government was referring to Omar 2, the file on case from Munaf says quote at page 24, "None of this the foregoing discussion about inquiring into conditions on the end, receiving end. None of this means that the executive branch may detain or transfer Americans or individuals in U.S. territory at will without judicial review of the positive legal authority for the detention or transfer."

So mere expressions of interest are not a lawful basis. It has to be an extradition or its functional equivalent. Munaf is, Munaf recognizes as your Honor recognized a limited exception to that rule where a petitioner, a person voluntarily travels to a country, is arrested in that country for violating that country's laws, and is subject, and is subject to prosecution there.

Because that country has exclusive jurisdiction over crimes committed in its territory. So in that sense it's not an

extradition. In the sense of *Valentine* they understood sense a transfer to another country.

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There has to be positive legal authority. We're not here at this point nothing, we've not raised any issue about what conditions might be like. That's not before the Court, but there has to be a legal basis for the, for the transfer.

So you know otherwise I mean the United States can't forcibly bring people in, I'll just, I'll stick with what's in the record. But as the counsel for the government said brought him in to another country from Syria into Iraq, and if that's a different situation than Munaf.

THE COURT: Maybe you were going to get to this, but how do you respond to Mr. Burnham's argument that transferring the detainee to another country is in fact relief because they are being released from custody?

MR. HAFETZ: Thank you, your Honor, I do want to address that. That is not release. Transfer, handover to another country is not release. Release is release. It's a relinquishment of custody resulting in the petitioner's freedom. It is opening the jailhouse doors.

THE COURT: What about Mr. Burnham's argument that they could basically just open the door of the facility to which he's being detained and tell him he's free to go and that would constitute relief under the petition for habeas

corpus? Or do you think it requires more? In other words, it's possible that the United States could simply say okay, here, you're free to leave and the detainee is picked up by another country's forces immediately, but as far as the government is concerned he's been granted complete relief.

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Is that, is that how it is supposed to work?

MR. HAFETZ: We're seeking — the release from custody does not — if this Court were to grant the habeas petition and order his release it would mean opening the jailhouse doors. At that point what else might or might not be required depending on what the government said or represented is not before the Court, but essentially yes, he's seeking release from U.S. custody. And that is really night and day with Munaf. Munaf because they were pending criminal proceedings. And so relief there —

THE COURT: Was not possible.

MR. HAFETZ: Was not possible. What the Court said was effectively -- it was essentially harboring someone a fugitive from justice because Iraq had a sovereign interest in prosecuting them for crimes committed on their soil.

THE COURT: This Court does not have before it the mechanics or logistics of what that release would entail other than release, but I was curious as to your response that transfer was equivalent to the response to the argument

that transfer to another country is equivalent to release.

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MR. HAFETZ: No, I don't think if someone said you're released, you're free to go. Release is not we're releasing you, but we're handing you over to the custody of another government. I don't think anyone would understand that as release, and that's not how the cases look at it.

In Munaf, remember the Court talked about habeas as in equitable remedy. And so, in that case what the Court said was release was essentially, release and keeping information from Iraq which wanted to prosecute the detainees was not consistent with habeas as an equitable remedy. What a release order might look like here if the Court were to ultimately order one is a different question, but at bottom release is not transfer to another country nor are we asking for continued U.S. custody. The United States could terminate these proceedings today by authorizing his release, but they want to continue holding him, and or hand him over to another government. That's not release.

I just, we talked about Hamdi before in response to your Honor's order about the role of the courts. And again just to reiterate the language from Hamdi that the, absent suspension of habeas and there's no suspension here the Constitution envisions a role for all three branches when the liberty of a citizen is at stake. I'm paraphrasing but that's essentially the quote. And it's all three

branches that's the court's. It's also Congress. There has to be a legal basis to hand over a citizen. Typically that's an extradition statute or a treaty or some form of positive legal authority which as I read before is reiterated in *Omar II*.

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I have, if your Honor doesn't have more questions
I have just two final points to make. One is that the, as
your Honor pointed out, the government does not get to do an
end run around this Court's habeas jurisdiction. It cannot
circumvent this jurisdiction by pretending that transfer is
the same as release. Release is the way if the government
wants to moot a habeas petition it can release the citizen
from custody. There's no, you know, we cannot stand in the
way of that and that is what, that is the -- because that's
the remedy that this petitioner seeks.

THE COURT: Or they can charge him?

MR. HAFETZ: Well, they can charge him, correct, your Honor. They can charge him with a crime. Again, they have to have a lawful basis to detain him or transfer him. There's no charges against him by the United States. Were the United States to charge him he would have a right under the Constitution to a trial and the various other rights your Honor is familiar with. But to contest those charges, but that would be a basis to detain him. It can't operate outside the boundaries of law. And, your Honor, as your

Honor noted we're merely seeking limited relief until the injunction until the Court can decide his habeas petition.

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And to conclude in light of the government's representations today which reiterate what was in its briefs that it is under no obligation or no restriction to transfer the petitioner to any country at anytime, we respectfully request that the Court order the, prohibit the respondent in addition to the ultimate relief we've asked for in our papers, prohibit his transfer until the Court can decide this motion.

THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Hafetz. Mr. Burnham, let me ask you, I know that the ACLU has requested — their motion is for, for an order prohibiting the transfer of the detainee pending his resolution of his petition for habeas corpus. With regard to the last request Mr. Hafetz just made, which is a request that the government be prohibited from transferring the detainee pending my ruling on this motion for preliminary injunction, is it the government's intention to transfer the detainee within the next 48 hours?

MR. BURNHAM: You mind if I just speak with my co-counsel for a second?

THE COURT: Please.

[Brief pause.]

MR. BURNHAM: Your Honor, I have no basis to think that's going to happen. But our -- so I'm not aware of any

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     intention to do that, but our position is right now we have
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     the authority to relinquish custody of him to another
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     sovereign as soon as another sovereign is ready.
                           Thank you. Your last request I will,
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               THE COURT:
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     I'll rule on it within the, probably shortly.
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               MR. HAFETZ: Thank you, your Honor.
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               THE COURT:
                           Thank you, all.
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               [Thereupon, the proceedings adjourned at 12:33
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               p.m.]
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CERTIFICATE I, Cathryn J. Jones, an Official Court Reporter for the United States District Court of the District of Columbia, do hereby certify that I reported, by machine shorthand, the proceedings had and testimony adduced in the above case. I further certify that the foregoing 45 pages constitute the official transcript of said proceedings as transcribed from my machine shorthand notes. In witness whereof, I have hereto subscribed my name, this the 22nd day of February, 2018. /s/\_Cathryn J. Jones Cathryn J. Jones, RPR Official Court Reporter 

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