

# The Intercept

May 8, 2025

Hon. Patricia Tolliver Giles  
United States District Judge  
United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia  
401 Courthouse Square  
Alexandria, VA 22314



**RE: *Suri v. Trump* (1:25-cv-00480)**

Dear Judge Giles,

I am a reporter for The Intercept, a nonprofit digital news outlet that is covering legal challenges to detentions and deportations around the country. *See, e.g., Akela Lacy, Palestinian Student Leader Was Called In for Citizenship Interview — Then Arrested by ICE*, The Intercept (Apr. 14, 2025), <https://theintercept.com/2025/04/14/ice-columbia-student-mohsen-mahdawi-citizenship-interview/>; Jonah Valdez, *What Comes Next in Mahmoud Khalil's Fight Against Deportation*, The Intercept (Apr. 12, 2025), <https://theintercept.com/2025/04/12/mahmoud-khalil-immigration-hearing-deportation-trump/>; Jonah Valdez, *In Trump's America, You Can Be Disappeared for Writing an Op-Ed*, The Intercept (Mar. 30, 2025), <https://theintercept.com/2025/03/30/tufts-rumeysa-ozturk-ice-immigration-op-ed/>.

These cases are of historic importance amid the public debate about the scope and legality of the Trump administration's actions. In each case, it is vital that the public have the chance to understand the parties' arguments as well as the evidence upon which the courts evaluate them.

Currently, however, access to the filings in this case is restricted under Rule 5.2(c), which prohibits non-parties from remotely accessing the full electronic record via PACER. Under these restrictions, members of the press and all other non-parties may only access the full electronic record by visiting the courthouse. I am covering the case remotely from Los Angeles, where I'm based, and I'm not able to travel to Virginia to access court filings in person. The Intercept — like many other press outlets covering this case across the country and around the world — does not have the financial resources to hire runners to access records in-person at the courthouse, particularly not on an ongoing basis over the course of this matter.

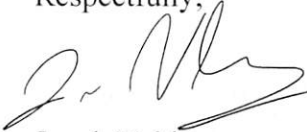
Rule 5.2(c) allows district courts to lift the automatic restrictions to remote access, as Dr. Khan Suri has requested. Dkt. 52. In another of the matters The Intercept has covered, the case of Mahmoud Khalil in the Southern District of New York, Judge Furman lifted these restrictions, which facilitated greater public access to the complex judicial proceedings. *See Khalil v. Joyce*, No. 1:25-cv-01935, Dkt. 29 (S.D.N.Y. Mar. 12, 2025); *id.* at Dkt. 35 (directing the Clerk of Court "to change the nature of suit code to No. 530, 'Habeas Corpus,' thereby lifting the limitations on remote electronic access to the docket imposed by Rule 5.2(c)"). Other district courts have issued similar rulings recently pursuant to their discretion under Rule 5.2(c). *See, e.g., G.F.F. v. Trump*,

No. 1:25-cv-02886, Dkt. 39 (S.D.N.Y. Apr. 15, 2025); *A.S.R. v. Trump*, No. 3:25-cv-00113, Dkt. 46 (W.D. Penn. Apr. 25, 2025); *J.A.V. v. Trump*, No. 1:25-cv-00072, Dkt. 55 (S.D. Tex. Apr. 25, 2025); *W.M.M. v. Trump*, No. 1:25-cv-00059, Dkt. 53 (N.D. Tex. Apr. 29, 2025); *Patel v. Lyons*, No. 1:25-cv-01096, Minute Order Dated May 6, 2025 (D.D.C.).

As courts in this circuit have long recognized, the “value of openness in judicial proceedings can hardly be overestimated.” *United States v. Moussaoui*, 65 F. App’x 881, 885 (4th Cir. 2003). In recognition of the public’s interest in these proceedings, I respectfully ask that the Court do as Judge Furman did and lift the restrictions under Rule 5.2(c) in this case. Doing so will not only facilitate more accurate and thorough press coverage of these proceedings, but will also vindicate “the public’s ability to oversee and monitor the workings of the Judicial Branch.” *Doe v. Pub. Citizen*, 749 F.3d 246, 263 (4th Cir. 2014) (citation omitted).

Thank you for considering this request.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonah Valdez', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jonah Valdez

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