

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
ADMINISTRATIVE COURT
In the matter of a claim for Permission to Judicial Review

CO/ /2017

BETWEEN

REGINA
Upon the Application of

D1527

Claimant

-and-

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT

Defendant

WITNESS STATEMENT

I, **D1527** of Brook House IRC, Perimeter Road South, London Gatwick Airport, Gatwick, RH6 0PQ make the following statement to the best of my knowledge and belief.

1. I find it difficult to discuss the bad things that have happened to me in my life, but I have tried to set out here what my life has been like in detention for the past few months.
2. On 13th November 2016 I was arrested on suspicion of several serious criminal offences. I explained that I was innocent, but no one believed me. I spent a month at HMP Highdown and then 3 months at HMP Belmarsh before the charges were dropped on 9th March 2017.
3. My time on remand at Belmarsh was really difficult for me, it was so frustrating that no one believed me. I tried to explain to the officers that I hadn't committed the offence, but I struggled and felt restricted by my English. The officers thought I was being difficult when I started hurting myself, but it was just because I was unhappy and angry that I had been put in prison for something I didn't do. They restrained me and put me in the Healthcare wing for long periods. I was locked up in a room by

myself, without my roommate. They wouldn't let me out of the room at all. It was a very distressing experience.

4. On 9th March 2017, I went to the court and my lawyer told me that the police would drop the serious charges against me if I pleaded guilty to two small offences. I didn't really understand what I was being asked to do and there wasn't an interpreter available before we went into court, but they told me I would be released if I did it so I agreed. I went in front of the judge and was told that I wouldn't have to go back to Belmarsh. This made me really happy.
5. However, after the hearing, I was taken back into the cells at the court and then they moved me back to Belmarsh. I didn't understand why. Then someone came and told me that I was being detained because of my immigration problems. This made me really upset and I fell into despair.
6. Going back to Belmarsh was awful. I was put back on the Vulnerable Prisoners wing, which is where they keep the child sex offenders, even though I hadn't done anything wrong. The other prisoners assumed that I had been to court and been convicted so they would harass me and try to attack me because they thought I was a paedophile. Time spent with the other prisoners was really scary, but it was almost as bad to be locked up in my room. Often we were locked up for 22-23 hours a day, particularly if an incident happened or they were short on staff. One time they locked down the prison to search for weapons and we didn't get let out at all.
7. I was quite lucky really because I am [Sensitive/irrelevant] and there are lots of [Sensitive/irrelevant] prisoners in Belmarsh who look after each other a bit. Without them I would have been defenceless, some of the white prisoners were attacked and beaten up really badly. I didn't like being dependent on the other prisoners for safety though and I was worried that they would turn on me as well if they found out that I was [] There were also some [Sensitive/irrelevant] with very radical views, but I did my best to avoid them.
8. A few weeks after I was sent back to Belmarsh, someone from the Home Office came to see me. I didn't understand why they wanted to see me and they didn't bring an interpreter. I told them that I wanted a lawyer with me to help me follow what was going on. They went away after that.

9. My support worker [] arranged for a lawyer to come and see me at Belmarsh. I was pleased that someone was here to help me, but I struggled to tell my lawyer much about my life at first. I don't like to talk with strangers about what has happened to me.
10. Once my lawyer started working for me I was moved to IRC Brook House. I thought it would be better to be out of prison and it was good to be away from the dangerous criminals, but the detention centre was scary in a different way. Lots of people get deported from the detention centre and I was really worried that they were moving me to Brook House to put me on a plane. I could see the airport as we drove into the detention centre.
11. In the detention centre they don't look after me very well. If I do anything to hurt myself they just put me into E-wing, which is where they put anyone who is badly behaved or not well. I hate going to E-wing because I have to spend almost the whole day locked up by myself, just like I was back at Belmarsh. There are lots of people with really bad mental health problems in the detention centre and sometimes it seems like the staff are overwhelmed by it. They don't provide me with much attention, just put me in E-wing and hope I get better. I try to not tell them how I am feeling to avoid being moved to E-wing, but then my mood gets worse and worse until I start hurting myself and they move me anyway.
12. My lawyers have explained to me how the travel document process works and I am happy to cooperate and provide all the information that the Home Office want. I had an interview last week with the Home Office and they invited my lawyer as well. I tried my best to tell them everything about my background in Egypt, but I have forgotten a lot of the last few years. I was pleased that at the end of the interview the Home Office person thanked me for being helpful and accepted that I had tried my best to tell him everything.
13. I try to kill myself on a regular basis. The staff took away anything that I might use to harm myself. Once they did that, I stopped eating to try and end my life. I only eat when I am having a good day and even then only very little bits of food, so I have lost

a lot of weight in detention. I'm not sure how much because I don't let the staff weigh me; they aren't nice to me and I don't like it when they come into the room.

14. I am very worried about the future if I am left in detention. I don't see how things can get better, my problems will just get worse and worse. I want to go back to living with my friends in London like I used to before I was arrested. I still had some problems then, but I was much happier and didn't try to hurt myself and end my life every day. I have friends outside of detention and my support worker to help look after me. I want to get better so I can properly explain to everyone why I can't go back to Egypt and be allowed to live in the UK.

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true:

Signed: _____

Signature

Dated: _____

6/16/17