

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 5, 2025

Mr. Todd M. Lyons  
Acting Director  
Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
500 12th St SW  
Washington, DC 20536

Dear Acting Director Lyons:

I write about the alarming arrest and detention of Dr. Badar Khan Suri, a J-1 visa holder and postdoctoral fellow at Georgetown University. Dr. Khan Suri is currently held in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody at the Prairieland Detention Center in Alvarado, Texas, where he has been deemed a high-risk custody detainee requiring maximum security control and supervision. However, Dr. Khan Suri has not been charged with a crime and is a legally admitted visiting scholar with no prior criminal record. The obscure immigration provision with which he has been charged does not subject him to mandatory detention. We urge you to reconsider his eligibility for release and at minimum, the reevaluation of his custody classification.

On the evening of March 17, 2025, Dr. Badar Khan Suri, an Indian national with valid J-1 visa status as a visiting scholar, was arrested and detained by masked Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agents outside of his Arlington, Virginia home.<sup>i</sup> Dr. Khan Suri was charged with removability under 8 U.S.C. §1227(a)(4)(C), a rarely invoked immigration provision allowing the government to seek the deportation of individuals deemed potential foreign policy risks by the Secretary of State.<sup>ii</sup>

Dr. Khan Suri is one of many visa-holders across the country, like Mahmoud Khalil, Rumeysa Ozturk, and others, who have been targeted amid President Donald Trump's pursuit of policies to instill fear and silence dissent on college campuses. Such policies are an assault on freedoms protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Dr. Khan Suri was, within days, transferred to a far-away immigration detention facility in Alexandria, Louisiana and is now being held at the Prairieland Detention Center, 1,300 miles away from his home. Once at the Prairieland Detention Center, Dr. Khan Suri was informed of his classification as a high-risk custody detainee. This classification is typically reserved for serious and violent criminal offenses, institutional disciplinary history, or affiliations to criminal organizations.<sup>iii</sup> As a result of the security protocols applied to this high-risk classification, Dr. Khan Suri is only permitted two hours per week of recreation, and he is not permitted to work or spend more time outside his cell. According to legal counsel, Dr. Khan Suri was also initially

denied religious accommodations, including Halal food, Ramadan fasting accommodations, a Quran, and a prayer mat.

At the time of his arrest, Dr. Khan Suri was a postdoctoral fellow at the Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, where he was teaching a course on Majoritarianism & Minority Rights in South Asia.<sup>iv</sup> He is married to a U.S. citizen of Palestinian descent, with whom he has three children: a nine-year-old son and five-year-old twins – a boy and a girl.

He has not been charged with a crime and has no prior criminal record. The invocation of his removability under 8 U.S.C. §1227(a)(4)(C) does not subject him to mandatory detention, and more importantly, are a violation of his protected speech, viewpoint, religion, national origin, and protected associations. The circumstances surrounding his arrest and detention raise serious concerns about civil liberties and academic freedom. For these reasons, we urge you to reconsider Dr. Badar Khan Suri's eligibility for release. At minimum, his custody classification should be immediately reevaluated. Additionally, I request any documentation and materials in ICE's possession related to Badar Khan Suri's classification decision.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I look forward to your response regarding his release and documents pertaining to his classification decision. Please respond no later than May 12, 2025.

Sincerely,



Donald S. Beyer, Jr.  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

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<sup>i</sup> Ventre, Sarah. (2025, April 11). Jewish students at Georgetown protest detention of professor Badar Khan Suri. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2025/04/11/g-s1-59580/jewish-students-at-georgetown-protest-detention-of-professor-badar-khan-suri>

<sup>ii</sup> United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. [Khan Suri v. Trump et al.](#) Case No. 1:25-cv-480.

<sup>iii</sup> U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Revised December 2016. [Custody Classification System](#)

<sup>iv</sup> Badar Khan Suri. Georgetown University. <https://acmcu.georgetown.edu/profile/badar-khan-suri/>