ACTION AT LAW In the Fourth Circuit Court for Knox County, Tennessee

A Jesús Rafael Lacle:

Se ha presentado una Petición para el Nombramiento de Tutela de Jesús David Lacle Rodríguez ante el Cuarto Tribunal de Circuito del Condado de Knox, Tennessee, por Marielbis Rodríguez Reyes. En dicha Petición se declara que usted es el padre biológico de Jesús y que lo ha abandonado, ya que no ha tenido contacto con él ni le ha proporcionado ningún tipo de apoyo económico desde su nacimiento.

Por lo tanto, se le ordena responder a esta Petición comunicándose con Michael Shao, el abogado suscrito de Marielbis Rodríguez Reves, antes del 19 de enero de 2026.

Si usted no responde antes del 19 de enero de 2026, se dictará una orden en rebeldía en su contra. Dicha orden nombrará a Marielbis Rodríguez Reyes como tutora de Jesús. Además, se determinará que usted ha abandonado a Jesús y que no es en su mejor interésregresar a venezuela.

Michael Shao, BPR #040622

Managing Attorney

Catholic Charities of East Tennessee, Office of Immigration Services

119 Dameron Ave Knoxville, TN 37917 Telephone: 865-770-5734 WhatsApp: +1 865-393-3176

mshao@ccctn.org

Attorney for the Petitioner

IN THE FOURTH CIRCUIT COURT FOR KNOX COUNTY, TENNESSEE

In re Jesus Lacle Reyes, and	1025 DEC -5 AM IU: 40	
Zahir Alvarez Rodriguez, Minor children	MIKE HAMMOND	
Minors,)	No. 164106
Marielbis Rodriguez Reyes)	
Petitioner.)	

SWORN PETITION FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A GUARDIAN

Marielbis Rodriguez Reyes (the "Petitioner"), by and through counsel and pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated section 34-2-101 *et seq.*, petitions this Court for an Order appointing her as the guardian of Jesus David Lacle Rodriguez and Zahir Rosario Alvarez Rodriguez (collectively, the "Minors"). If this Court grants the requested guardianship to protect the health and safety of the Minors, the Order will also be used for the secondary purpose of petitioning U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to grant the Minor Special Immigrant Juvenile status, as defined in 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(27)(J). In support of this Petition, the Petitioner states as follows:

THE PARTIES

 The Minor, Jesus David Lacle Rodriguez, was born on November 13, 2008, in Coro Falcon, Venezuela. As of the date of this Petition, the Minor is seventeen (17) years

- old and is not married. The Minor's current residential and mailing address is 417

 Bear Creek Lane, Knoxville, TN 37922.
- 2. The Minor, Zahir Rosario Alvarez Rodriguez, was born on September 4, 2017, in Coro Falcon, Venezuela. As of the date of this Petition, the Minor is eight (8) years old and is not married. The Minor's current residential and mailing address is 417 Bear Creek Lane, Knoxville, TN 37922.
- 3. The Petitioner, both the Minors' biological mother, was born on September 11, 1988, in Coro Falcon, Venezuela. As of the date of this Petition, the Petitioner is 37 years old. The Petitioner's current residential and mailing address is 417 Bear Creek Lane, Knoxville, TN 37922. The Petitioner is the proposed guardian for purposes of this Petition.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 4. This Court has jurisdiction pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated sections 16-10-101 and 34-2-101.
- 5. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated section 34-2-101.
- 6. The Petitioner, as a person with knowledge of the circumstances necessitating the appointment of a guardian, has standing to bring this Petition pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated section 34-2-102.

FACTS

- 7. The Minor, Jesus David Lacle Rodriguez, was born on November 13, 2008, in Coro Falcon, Venezuela.
- 8. The Minor, Zahir Rosario Alvarez Rodriguez, was born on September 4, 2017, in Coro Falcon, Venezuela.
- 9. The Minor, Jesus David Lacle Rodriguez's, birth certificate includes the names of both the Minor's biological parents, the Petitioner and Jesus Rafael Lacle. The Minor, Zahir Rosario Alvarez Rodriguez's, birth certificate includes the names of both the Minor's biological parents, the Petitioner and Jose Greogorio Alvarez Borges. Copies of the Minors' birth certificates and verified translations are attached as Exhibit A.
- 10. As young children, the Minors resided with the Petitioner in Coro Falcon, Venezuela.
- 11. Following the Minor, Jesus David Lacle Rodriguez's birth, he has had minimal contact with his biological father, Jesus Rafael Lacle. The Minor last saw his father 6 years ago. The Minor's father has not financially supported the Minor and the Minor has not had contact with him for the past 6 years. To the Petitioner's knowledge, the Minor's father still resides in Venezuela. The Minor's father has abandoned the child, resulting in no contact and no support from the father.
- 12. Nine years later, the other Minor, Zahir Rosario Alvarez Rodriguez, was born. The Minor's father, Jose Greogorio Alvarez Borges, is currently imprisoned in Venezuela for drug trafficking offenses. The father is dangerous, was abusive to Petitioner and her children, and has threatened the lives of the Petitioner and the

- Minors. If the Minor and Petitioner were required to return to Venezuela, they would be in fear for their lives as the Minor's father has the ability to come and go from the prison whenever he wants.
- 13. The Petitioner and the Petitioner's immediate family have been the sole providers of the Minors. The Petitioner has not had any contact with or received any financial support from either of the Minors' biological fathers.
- 14. Venezuela is a country that has numerous complaints of human rights issues, arbitrary imprisonment and killings, cruel and torturous punishments, and government corruption. See U.S. Dep't of State, Bureau of Democracy, H.R. and Lab., Venezuela 2022 Human Rights Report (2022).
- 15. As a result, the Petitioner migrated to the United States, in September 2021, in search of better opportunities and because it was very difficult for the Petitioner to properly care for, provide for, and protect the Minors in Venezuela.
- 16. The Petitioner left the Minors in the custody of their maternal grandmother. While the Petitioner was in America, she would frequently speak to the Minors by phone and send money back to Venezuela to help support them.
- 17. In December 2024, the Minors left their home in Venezuela and migrated to the United States in search of safety and better opportunities and to be with their mother.
- 18. The Minors crossed the Mexican/American border on or around December 29, 2024, and surrendered to immigration officials. The Minors were held in a facility operated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee

- Resettlement, Division of Unaccompanied Children Operations until they were released to the Petitioner's custody on January 12, 2025.
- 19. Since arriving in Knoxville, the Petitioner has been the sole provider of the Minors.
- 20. In America, the Minors has access to better education, healthcare, opportunities.
- 21. The Petitioner has enrolled the Minors in school and ensured they attended classes appropriately. The Minors have adjusted very well to life in America.
- 22. Jesus David Lacle Rodriguez attends school at Bearden High School.
- 23. Zahir Rosario Alvarez Rodriguez attends school at A.L. Lotts Elementary School.
- 24. If the Minors were to return to Venezuela, they would lack a willing and able caregiver. Moreover, the dangerous conditions and high rate of violent crime would make it dangerous for the Minors to live there. As a result, it is not in the Minor's best interest to return to Venezuela.

RELEVANT LAW

- 25. Congress created the Special Immigrant Juvenile classification to provide immigration relief to undocumented children who have suffered abuse, neglect, or abandonment. *See In re Domingo C.L.*, No. M2016-02383-COA-R3-JV, 2017 WL 3769419, at *2 (Tenn. Ct. App. Aug. 30, 2017).
- 26. For a minor to obtain the Special Immigrant Juvenile classification, a state court must make factual findings about the abuse, neglect, or abandonment of the minor; the viability of the minor's reunification with family members in his country of origin; and the best interests of the minor. *Id.* at *3.

- 27. These factual findings are often made through guardianship proceedings. Id.
- 28. The Tennessee guardianship statute provides:

Subject to the court's determination of what is in the best interests of the minor, the court shall consider the following persons in the order listed for appointment of the guardian:

- (1) The parent or parents of the minor;
- (2) The person or persons designated by the parent or parents in a will or other written document;
- (3) Adult siblings of the minor;
- (4) Closest relative or relatives of the minor; and
- (5) Other person or persons.

Tenn. Code Ann. § 34-2-103.

29. The primary role of the court in a guardianship proceeding is to determine what is in the best interests of the minor. *In re Danely C.*, No. M2016-02054-COA-R3-JV, 2017 WL 5901022, at *6 (Tenn. Ct. App. Nov. 29, 2017). "[I]t is not the role of [the] court to consider the purpose or motivation of the minor applicant or a parent, matters of immigration policy, or whether the minor is a 'worthy candidate' for [Special Immigrant Juvenile] status." *Id.* at *7.

THE PETITION

30. In consideration of the facts set forth above, and for the secondary purpose of requesting Special Immigrant Juvenile status pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(27)(J) with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Minors need to be appointed

- a guardian. This Court qualifies as a "juvenile court" as that term is defined in 8 C.F.R. § 204.11(a).
- 31. The Petitioner is the Minors' biological mother and is the proposed guardian for purposes of this Petition.
- 32. The Minors are currently in the Petitioner's custody pursuant to the Verification of Release provided by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, Division of Unaccompanied Children Operations. The Verification of Release is attached as Exhibit B.
- 33. The Minors are unmarried and do not own any real or personal property.
- 34. The Minor, Jesus David Lacle Rodriguez's biological father, is Jesus Rafael Lacle, currently residing in Venezuela.
- 35. The Minor, Zahir Rosario Alvarez Rodriguez's biological father is Jose Greogorio Alvarez Borges, currently residing in Venezuela.
- 36. The Minors lack a willing and able caregiver in Venezuela. Moreover, the dangerous conditions and high rate of violent crime in Venezuela would make it dangerous for the Minors to live there. As a result, it is not in the Minor's best interest to return to Venezuela.
- 37. The Minors live in a loving and stable home in the United States, where they have a good relationship with the Petitioner. The Minors have a strong network of family and friends and have access to better education, health care, and opportunities. As a result, it is in the Minors' best interest to remain in the United States.

- 38. The Petitioner requests the following areas of protection and assistance be included in the Court's Order of Appointment: (1) all matters associated with the medical treatment of the Minors; (2) all matters associated with the education of the Minors; and (3) all matters associated with the housing, care, and custody of the Minors.
- 39. The Petitioner further requests that the following findings be made by the Court and included in the Court's Order of Appointment: (1) that the Minors are legally placed by this Court with the Petitioner, as guardian, pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated section 34-1-101 et seq.; (2) that reunification of the Minors with their biological fathers is not viable by virtue of their abandonment of the Minors, as defined under Tennessee Code Annotated section 36-1-102(1)(A)(i); and (3) that it is not in the Minors' best interest to be returned to their parents' previous country of nationality and residence, Venezuela.

WHEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing, the Petitioner respectfully requests:

- (a) That process issue as necessary upon the Minors
- (b) That this Court set a date and time for the hearing of this Petition;
- (c) That this Court grant the Petition and appoint the Petitioner as the guardian of the Minors with such power and authority as this Court deems appropriate; and
- (d) That this Court grant any other relief to which the Petitioner may be entitled.

VERIFICATION

I, Marielbis Rodriguez Reyes, after being duly sworn in accordance with law, state that the foregoing Sworn Petition was translated to me in Spanish and that, to the best of my knowledge, all statements and factual allegations in the Petition are true and correct.

Marielbis Rodriguez Reyes

Subscribed, sworn to, and acknowledged before me this 3 day of <u>December</u>2025

Notary Public

My commission expires $\frac{5}{19}/29$

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Shao, BPR #040622 Managing Attorney Catholic Charities of East Tennessee Office of Immigration Services 119 Dameron Ave Knoxville, Tennessee 37917 Telephone: 865-770-5734

mshao@ccetn.org
Attorney for the Petitioner

Exhibit A

BIRTH CERTIFICATE TRANSLATION CIVIL REGISTRY **VENEZUELA**

Name:

JESUS

DAVID

LACLE RODRIGUEZ

Sex: MALE

(First)

(Middle)

(Paternal/Maternal)

Date of Birth:

11 (Month)

13 (Day) 2008

Place of Birth:

COLONIA

FALCON

(Year)

VENEZUELA

(Place)

(State)

(Country)

Father's Name: JESUS RAFAEL LACLE

NATIONALITY: VENEZUELA

Mother's Name (Maiden): MARIELBIS ANAIS RODRIGUEZ REYES

NATIONALITY: VENEZUELA

Date Birth was Registered: 12/09/2021

Date Certificate was issued: 10/14/2024

Place Issued: COLONIA FALCON VENEZUELA

Custodian of Record: JESUS ALEJANDRO

Certified Copy: YES

CERTIFICATE OF INTERPRETER:

I, NAELYNEJADAMES, swear that I am fluent in the Spanish and English languages: I am competent to translate from English to Spanish and from Spanish to English; I hereby certify that this translation is true, accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge ability and belief.

NAELYNM ADAMES

Catholic Charities of East TN Office of Immigrant Services

119 Dameron Ave Knoxville TN 37917



REPÚBLICA BOLIVARIANA DE VENEZUELA CONSEJO NACIONAL ELECTORAL COMISIÓN DE REGISTRO CIVIL Y EL ECTORAL OFICINA DE REGISTRO CIVIL MUNICIPAL COLINA MUNICIPIO COLINA ESTADO FALCÓN

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Correspondiente a Desus David

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BIRTH CERTIFICATE TRANSLATION CIVIL REGISTRY VENEZUELA

Name:

ZAHIR

ROSARIO

ALVAREZ RODRIGUEZ

Sex: FEMALE

(First)

(Middle)

(Paternal/Maternal)

Date of Birth:

09

04 (Day)

2017 (Year)

Place of Birth:

COLONIA

(Month)

FALCON

VENEZUELA

(Place)

(State)

(Country)

Father's Name: JOSE GREOGORIO ALVAREZ BORGES

NATIONALITY: VENEZUELA

Mother's Name (Maiden): MARIELBIS ANAIS RODRIGUEZ REYES NATIONALITY: VENEZUELA

Date Birth was Registered: 12/09/2021

Date Certificate was issued: 10/14/2024

Place Issued: COLONIA FALCON VENEZUELA

Custodian of Record: REBECA OMOMOTO

Certified Copy: YES

CERTIFICATE OF INTERPRETER:

I, NAELYNE ADAMES, swear that I am fluent in the Spanish and English languages: I am competent to translate from English to Spanish and from Spanish to English; I hereby certify that this translation is true, accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge ability and belief.

NAELYNE ADAMES

Catholic Charities of East TN Office of Immigrant Services

119 Dameron Ave Knoxville TN 37917



REPÚBLICA BOLIVARIANA DE VENEZUELA CONSEJO NACI-NAL ELECTORAL COMISIÓN DE REGISTA O CIVIL Y EL ECTORAL OFICINA DE REGISTRO CIVIL MUNICIPAL COLINA MUNICIPIO COLINA ESTADO FALCÓN

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Exhibit B



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS) OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT (ORR) DIVISION OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN OPERATIONS (DUCO) VERIFICATION OF RELEASE

		VERIFICATION	OF RELEASE	
Name:	Jesus David Lacle Rodriguez		Aliases (if any):	Jesus Lacle Rodriguez
Date of Birth:	11/13/2008 Venezuela		A#: Eye Color:	221312087
Country of Birth:				Brown
Primary Language:	Spanish			
The Office of Refugee F the Homeland Security 2008 to the care of	Resettlement (ORR) has release Act of 2002 and section 235 of Name of Spons	the William Wilbe	ned minor from Federal cu rforce Trafficking Victims F is Anais Rodriguez Reyes	stody pursuant to section 462 of Protection Reauthorization Act of
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	Relationship to	Child: Mother		
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ORR Care Provider Na	ne: National Youth	National Youth Advocate Program - Las Vegas, NV		
Discharge Date.	e Date. 01/12/2025			

THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) STATEMENT OF PUBLIC BURDEN: The purpose of this information collection is to provide unaccompanied children and their sponsors with official documentation showing that ORR released the child into the sponsor's care and custody. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 0.17 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. This is a mandatory collection of information (Homeland Security Act, 6 U S C. 279). An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this information collection is 0970-0552. If you have any comments on this collection of information please contact <u>UCPolicy@acf hhs gov.</u>



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS) OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT (ORR) DIVISION OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN OPERATIONS (DUCO) VERIFICATION OF RELEASE

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Name:	Zahir Rosario Alvarez Rodriguez 09/04/2017 Venezuela			Aliases (if any):	Zahir Alvarez Rodriguez	
Date of Birth:] A#:	221312088 Hazel	
Country of Birth:			Name of the last o	Eye Color:		
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	12	City:	Maryville			
	3	State:	TN		Zip Code: 37801	
		Primary Phone#:	6159280325			
		Relationship to Child:	Mother			
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Exhibit C

IN THE FOURTH CIRCUIT COURT FOR KNOX COUNTY, TENNESSEE

In re Jesus Lacle Reyes, and)		4
Zahir Alvarez Rodriguez,)		*
minor children,)		
Minors.)	No	
Marielbis Rodriguez Reyes,)		
Petitioner.)		

ORDER OF APPOINTMENT

This matter came to be heard on the Sworn Petition filed by Marielbis Rodriguez Reyes (the "Petitioner") for the appointment of a guardian for Jesus Lacle Reyes and Zahir Alvarez Rodriguez (collectively, the "Minors"). The Petitioner has requested that this Court enter an Order appointing the Petitioner as the guardian of the Minors. Based upon the statements of counsel, the pleadings filed in this case, and the record as a whole, the Court finds that the Petition is well-taken and should be granted.

In granting the petition, this Court makes the following findings:

- (1) pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated section 34-1-101 et seq., this Court is authorized to make judicial determinations about the custody and care of juveniles;
- (2) the Minor, Jesus Lacle Reyes, was born in Coro Falcon, Venezuela, on November 13, 2008, and currently resides with the Petitioner in Knoxville, Tennessee;

- (3) the Minor Zahir Alvarez Rodriguez was born in Coro Falcon Venezuela on September 4, 2017, and currently resides with the Petitioner in Knoxville, Tennessee;
- (4) The Minor, Jesus Lacle Reyes's biological father, is Jesus Rafael Lacle, currently residing in Venezuela;
- (5) The Minor, Zahir Alvarez Rodriguez's biological father, is Jose Greogorio Alvarez Borges, currently residing in Venezuela;
- (6) the Minors' biological mother is the Petitioner, Marielbis Rodriguez Reyes, currently residing in Knoxville, Tennessee;
- (7) the Minors' are unmarried and do not own any real or personal property;
- (8) reunification of the Minor, Jesus Lacle Reyes, with his biological father, Jesus Rafael Lacle, is not viable because of the father's abandonment of the Minor as defined under Tennessee Code Annotated section 36-1-102(1)(A)(i), and as evidenced by the following:
 - (a) the Minor's biological father has not had any contact and has not provided any financial support to the Minor since he was 11 years old;
- (9) reunification of the Minor, Zahir Alvarez Rodriguez, with his biological father, Jose Greogorio Alvarez Borges, is not viable because of the father's abandonment of the Minor as defined under Tennessee Code Annotated section 36-1-102(1)(A)(i), and as evidenced by the following:

- (a) the Minor has not had any contact with his father since arriving in the United States, and has never received any financial support from his biological father;
- (b) moreover, the Minor's biological father has abused and physically threatened the Minor and his family;
- (10) it is not in the Minors' best interest to be returned to their parents' country of origin, Venezuela, because they lacks a willing and capable caregiver there, and because of the high rate of violent crime directly affecting the Minors and their family members in Venezuela;
- (11) it is in the Minors' best interest to remain in the United States; and
- (7) it is in the Minors' best interest for the Petitioner to be appointed as their guardian pursuant to this Court's authority under Tennessee Code Annotated section 34-1-101 et seq.

Accordingly, by this Order, this Court legally commits to and places the Minors under the custody of the Petitioner, an individual who is appointed as the Minors' guardian for the following areas of protection and assistance: (1) all matters associated with the medical treatment of the Minors; (2) all matters associated with the education of the Minors; and (3) all matters associated with the housing, care, and custody of the Minors.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Sworn Petition be GRANTED and that the Petitioner be appointed as the guardian of the Minors. The costs of this matter are

taxed to the Petitioner, in care of her und	ersigned counsel, for which execution may issue
if necessary.	
Entered this day of	, 20
	Hon. Gregory S. McMillan

APPROVED FOR ENTRY:

Michael Shao, BPR #040622

Managing Attorney
Catholic Charities of East Tennessee
Office of Immigration Services
119 Dameron Ave
Knoxville, Tennessee 37917
Telephone: 865-770-5734
mshao@ccetn.org
Attorney for the Petitioner