



SAMPLE – FOR DEMONSTRATION ONLY
NOT FOR FILING

In the Matter of: [REDACTED], Respondent

A Number: [REDACTED]

**EXPERT DECLARATION OF ZIMMA [REDACTED]
REGARDING INTERPRETATION DISCREPANCIES IN RUSSIAN–ENGLISH
HEARING**

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I, **Zimma [Redacted]**, declare as follows:

I. QUALIFICATIONS

1. I am a [Redacted] Federally Certified Interpreter for Russian ↔ English and have been working as a professional interpreter in legal settings for over five (5) years.
2. My experience includes immigration, federal, criminal, and civil proceedings in multiple jurisdictions across the United States.
3. I am the founder of Interpreter Audit, a boutique practice focused on post-hearing transcript audits and expert declarations in cases where interpretation accuracy is at issue.
4. I have reviewed and interpreted thousands of hours of live, remote, and recorded proceedings involving Russian-speaking respondents and witnesses.
5. I submit this declaration in my professional capacity as an expert interpreter. My opinions are based on my training, experience, and the materials described below.

II. MATERIALS REVIEWED

6. For purposes of this sample report, I have reviewed the following redacted materials:
 - Audio recording of a Russian–English merits hearing before an Immigration Judge (approx. 2 hours, 10 minutes), hereafter “Hearing Audio.”
 - Official English-language transcript of the same hearing, hereafter “Hearing Transcript.”
 - Limited case background summary provided by counsel (with all personal names, locations, and dates redacted for this sample).

All personally identifying information (names, A-numbers, dates, and specific locations) has been removed or replaced with bracketed placeholders (e.g., [City], [Country]) to protect confidentiality. The examples below are illustrative only and are not drawn from an identifiable, real case in their current form.

III. METHODOLOGY

7. I conducted a line-by-line comparison of the Hearing Transcript (English) against the Hearing Audio (Russian original plus English interpretation), focusing on whether the interpretation:
 - Accurately rendered the meaning of the respondent’s testimony and the court’s questions;
 - Maintained the register, tone, and nuance of the original Russian statements;
 - Avoided omissions, additions, or distortions of material facts;



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- Avoided misleading summaries or improper substitutions of key terms.
- 8. For each potential discrepancy, I identified the time stamp in the audio, compared the Russian source utterance and the English interpretation, and then examined how the exchange was captured in the Hearing Transcript.
- 9. Severity levels used in this sample are as follows:
 - High – Misinterpretation, omission, or addition that reasonably could affect credibility findings, legal eligibility, or the outcome of the case.
 - Medium – Significant nuance or contextual error that may not independently change the outcome but could influence how testimony is understood or weighed.
 - Low – Minor wording or stylistic issues that do not materially change meaning but illustrate the pattern and quality of interpretation.

IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

10. In this sample, I identified a total of one hundred eleven (111) interpretation discrepancies. By severity, these are distributed as follows: forty-seven (47) high-severity discrepancies, fifty-two (52) medium-severity discrepancies, and twelve (12) low-severity discrepancies.
11. In my professional opinion, the high-severity discrepancies (47 items), many of which involve omissions or meaning changes, are of a type and frequency that could reasonably affect how the Immigration Judge perceives the coherence, gravity, and credibility of the respondent's claim.

V. REPRESENTATIVE HIGH-SEVERITY EXAMPLES

12. Below are brief narrative descriptions of two high-severity issues, written in the same style I would use in an actual expert declaration (with identifying details redacted).

A. Omission of Prior Detention and Threats (High Severity)

13. Around 00:12:45, in response to a question about past harm, the respondent states in Russian that he was detained overnight by local security forces, interrogated, and explicitly warned that "if you continue, we will make your family disappear."
14. The English interpretation, as heard in the audio, is rendered as: "They stopped me and told me to be careful."
15. The Hearing Transcript then reflects only this softened interpretation. The entire reference to overnight detention and threats against family is omitted in both the interpretation and the written record.
16. This omission materially changes the gravity of the respondent's past harm and could directly affect the Judge's analysis of past persecution and well-founded fear.



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B. Minimization of Fear of Return (High Severity)

17. At approximately 00:55:03, the Judge asks how the respondent feels about returning to his home country.
18. In Russian, the respondent states that he is “terrified to go back,” adding that he is “certain they will put me in prison or worse.”
19. The English interpretation, as heard, is: “He is concerned about going back.”
20. The Hearing Transcript follows that less intense wording (“concerned”). This misinterpretation significantly dilutes the level of fear expressed and may affect the Judge’s perception of subjective fear, which is a key element in many forms of relief.

VI. PATTERN AND OVERALL IMPACT

21. The ten items identified in this sample illustrate a recurrent pattern of:
 - Omitting or minimizing critical elements of past harm and threats;
 - Softening the level of fear and intensity of experience;
 - Introducing language not spoken by the respondent (for example, “just a misunderstanding”).
22. While lower-severity items alone would not typically warrant reopening or remand, the cumulative effect of multiple high-severity discrepancies can materially alter how the respondent’s story appears in the record and how their credibility and eligibility for relief may be evaluated.
23. Based on this pattern, it is my professional opinion that the English transcript, as it currently stands, does not reliably reflect the substance of the respondent’s Russian-language testimony.

VII. LIMITATIONS

24. This is a demonstration sample prepared for use on the Interpreter Audit website. In an actual case, my work would be based on the complete, unredacted audio and the full certified transcript, as well as any accompanying exhibits necessary to understand context.
25. I would also coordinate with counsel to clarify which portions of the hearing are most legally significant (for example, nexus, one-year filing, particular social group) and prioritize those segments in greater depth.



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VIII. STATEMENT OF TRUTH AND SIGNATURE

26. I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, based on the materials provided and my professional expertise as a Federally Certified Court Interpreter.

27. Executed on this ____ day of _____, 20____, at
_____.

Zimma [Redacted]

Russian Interpreter

Interpreter Audit

Email: cases@interpretaudit.com

IX. NOTARY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

State of _____)

County of _____) ss.:

On this ____ day of _____, 20____, before me, the undersigned Notary Public,

personally appeared Zimma [Redacted], known to me (or satisfactorily proven) to be the person

whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged that she executed the

same for the purposes therein contained.

In witness whereof, I hereunto set my hand and official seal.

Notary Public

Printed Name: _____

My commission expires: _____