Preparing an Agenda and Questions for Meetings with Government Officials

Guidance:
Taking time to create an agenda and a list of questions for your meeting with government officials will ensure that you address your top concerns regarding your case. As you write your questions, keep them short and separated. If you ask too many questions all at once, you are less likely get answers for everything. Since you will have a specified amount of time for the meeting, make sure that you include your top concerns early on.

When thinking of specific questions to ask, consider what your top concerns about your loved one are right now. Examples include health, status, environment, or location. Consider where the trial is at this point and ask for any clarification that you may need, or questions you have around where it might be going. Think through any questions you might have around the operational response at this point. And don’t be afraid to repeat some questions at every meeting – especially if they are your top priority questions.

Meeting Agenda:
This is an example of a standard meeting agenda. You can use it each time you meet, adding or removing points when necessary, and fleshing out details where appropriate. You can also share your agenda with the government officials ahead of time, so that everyone comes prepared.

1. Updates from the government officials
   a. Updates on your loved one from any sources – health, environment
   b. Trial and status
   c. Response efforts
   d. Thoughts on new ways to get him/her home
   e. Updates on other families that may be held in the same country

2. Updates from the family
   a. Any new information you have from your sources
   b. Any connections you have made with outside advisors, etc.
   c. Any response ideas you have – including your use of social media or working with the media for news coverage

3. Specific questions/discussion