

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Rahul Rahul v. Warden, Adelanto ICE Processing Center, et al.

Rahul Rahul · No. 5:26-cv-00209-FLA-KES · Decided January 27, 2026

SUMMARY

The court orders respondents to show cause why the magistrate judge should not certify facts and initiate civil contempt proceedings based on an alleged transfer of a habeas petitioner in violation of an order preserving the court’s jurisdiction. Respondents must also provide the petitioner’s current location and describe efforts to return him to the Central District of California.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Karen E. Scott, U.S. Magistrate Judge
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Central District of California
DECIDED	January 27, 2026
DOCKET	5:26-cv-00209-FLA-KES
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner filed a counseled 28 U.S.C. § 2241 habeas petition challenging his immigration detention. After ordering Respondents not to transfer Petitioner outside the Central District of California, the court issued an order requiring Respondents to show cause why the magistrate judge should not certify facts concerning an alleged violation for civil contempt proceedings before a district judge.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; the document is a district court civil-minutes order requiring a show-cause response.

TOPICS

- contempt
- injunctions
- immigration detention
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- immigration detention
- habeas corpus
- civil contempt
- federal civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the magistrate judge could investigate an alleged violation of the court's transfer injunction and require Respondents to show cause why the facts should not be certified to a district judge for civil contempt proceedings.
2. Whether Respondents should be required to disclose Petitioner's location and describe efforts to return him to the Central District of California.

HOLDINGS

1. Under 28 U.S.C. § 636(e)(6)(B), a magistrate judge authorized to hear pretrial matters may investigate whether further contempt proceedings are warranted and, upon finding an act constituting civil contempt, certify the facts to a district judge and require the person involved to appear and show cause why the person should not be adjudged in contempt.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Under this process, the magistrate judge functions to certify the facts and not to issue an order of contempt.”
(at 2)

“The district judge shall thereupon hear the evidence as to the act or conduct complained of and, if it is such as to warrant punishment, punish such person in the same manner and to the same extent as for a contempt committed before a district judge.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Rahul Rahul filed a habeas petition alleging that he was detained by ICE in violation of the Constitution and federal law. The court ordered Respondents not to transfer him outside the Central District of California while the case was pending. Petitioner's counsel later reported that the ICE detainee locator showed Rahul being held at Florence SPC in Arizona, although counsel could not determine the precise date and time of the transfer.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Petitioner filed the habeas petition on January 15, 2026, and later supplied omitted exhibits. On January 22, 2026, the court ordered Respondents to respond and enjoined them from transferring, relocating, or removing Petitioner outside the Central District of California pending final resolution or further order. Petitioner then filed an emergency motion stating that the ICE detainee locator showed he had been transferred to Florence SPC in Arizona. The court ordered Respondents to explain why the facts should not be certified for civil contempt proceedings and to state Petitioner's location and efforts to return him.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Alcalde v. NAC Real Estate Invs. & Assignments, Inc.*, 580 F. Supp. 2d 969, 971 (C.D. Cal. 2008)
- *Bingman v. Ward*, 100 F.3d 653, 656-57 (9th Cir. 1996)

- John Hancock Life Ins. Co. (United States of Am.) v. Wu, No. 23-cv-02700, 2025 WL 1343618, at *2, 2025 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 88462, at *4 (N.D. Cal. May 8, 2025)

OPINION

Rahul Rahul v. Warden, Adelanto ICE Processing Center, et al.

PER CURIAM.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

CIVIL MINUTES—GENERAL

Case No. 5:26-cv-00209-FLA-KES Date: January 27, 2026 Title: RAHUL RAHUL v. WARDEN, ADELANTO ICE PROCESSING CENTER, et al. PRESENT:

THE HONORABLE KAREN E. SCOTT, U.S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE

K. Hopkins for Jazmin Dorado Not Present Courtroom Clerk Court Reporter

ATTORNEYS PRESENT FOR ATTORNEYS PRESENT FOR

PETITIONER: RESPONDENTS: None Present None Present PROCEEDINGS (IN CHAMBERS): Order Requiring Respondents to Show Cause Why They Should Not Be Held in Contempt for Violating a Court Order

I. BACKGROUND

On January 15, 2026, Rahul Rahul (“Petitioner”) filed a counseled petition for writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 (“Petition” at Dkt. 1). The Petition alleges that Petitioner is in the custody of the United States Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) in Adelanto, California, and that he was arrested and is being held in violation of the Constitution and laws of the United States. On January 21, 2026, at the Court’s request, Petitioner filed exhibits to the Petition that were inadvertently omitted from the initial filing. (Dkt. 4, 5.) On January 22, 2026, the Court ordered Respondents to respond to the Petition and also ordered: To preserve the Court’s jurisdiction, Respondents are enjoined from transferring, relocating, or removing Petitioner outside of the Central District of California pending final resolution of this case or further order of the Court. (Dkt. 6 at 2) (emphasis in original).

CIVIL MINUTES – GENERAL

Case No. 5:26-cv-00209-FLA-KES Date: January 27, 2026 Page 2 On January 23, 2026, Petitioner’s counsel filed an “Emergency Motion to Enforce Court Order,” stating that, as of January 22, 2026, the ICE Online Detainee Locator System indicated that Petitioner had been moved to Florence SPC in Arizona. (Dkt. 7.) Counsel admits that the “precise date and time of the transfer are currently unknown” because “ICE does not provide advance notice of transfers to counsel.” (Id. at 2.) As of the date of this order, the ICE Online Detainee Locator System does indicate that Petitioner is being held at Florence SPC. See <https://locator.ice.gov/odls/#/search> (last accessed Jan. 27, 2026).

II. LEGAL STANDARD

A magistrate judge's contempt authority is governed by 28 U.S.C. § 636(e). When a magistrate judge is authorized to hear pre-trial matters pursuant to § 636(b)(1), as in this case, the magistrate judge's contempt authority is defined by § 636(e)(6)(B)(i)-(iii). Under these provisions, a magistrate judge may investigate whether further contempt proceedings are warranted and, if the magistrate judge so finds, certify such facts to a district judge. 28 U.S.C. § 636(e)(6)(B)(iii); see also *Alcalde v. NAC Real Estate Invs. & Assignments, Inc.*, 580 F. Supp. 2d 969, 971 (C.D. Cal. 2008). Specifically, upon finding an act constituting a civil contempt: [T]he magistrate judge shall forthwith certify the facts to a district judge and may serve or cause to be served, upon any person whose behavior is brought into question under this paragraph, an order requiring such person to appear before a district judge upon a day certain to show cause why that person should not be adjudged in contempt by reason of the facts so certified. The district judge shall thereupon hear the evidence as to the act or conduct complained of and, if it is such as to warrant punishment, punish such person in the same manner and to the same extent as for a contempt committed before a district judge. 28 U.S.C. § 636(e)(6)(B)(iii). Under this process, the magistrate judge functions to certify the facts and not to issue an order of contempt. See *Bingman v. Ward*, 100 F.3d 653, 656-57 (9th Cir. 1996); see also *John Hancock Life Ins. Co. (United States of Am.) v. Wu*, No. 23-cv-02700, 2025 WL 1343618, at *2, 2025 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 88462, at *4 (N.D. Cal. May 8, 2025) ("A magistrate judge may investigate whether further contempt proceedings are warranted and, if the magistrate judge so finds, certify such facts to a district judge.").

III. CONCLUSION

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that, within seven (7) days of the date of this Order, Respondents shall show cause in writing, if any they have, why the Magistrate Judge should not certify the facts set forth in this Order and initiate civil contempt proceedings before the District

CIVIL MINUTES – GENERAL

Case No. 5:26-cv-00209-FLA-KES Date: January 27, 2026 Page 3 Judge. Respondents shall also tell the Court Petitioner's location and describe any efforts to return him to the Central District of California. Initials of Deputy Clerk kh