

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Hrachya Sakoyan v. Kristi Noem, et al.

Sakoyan · No. 25-cv-03406-BAS-MSB · Decided December 4, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of California orders the Government to respond to Hrachya Sakoyan’s 28 U.S.C. § 2241 habeas petition challenging his immigration detention. The Court sets briefing and a hearing schedule, confirms appointed counsel, and grants Petitioner’s motion to seal Exhibit A based on the sensitive information concerning his withholding-of-removal claim and alleged persecution.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Cynthia Bashant
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of California
DECIDED	December 4, 2025
DOCKET	25-cv-03406-BAS-MSB
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 challenging his immigration detention and a motion to seal an exhibit. The court declined to summarily dismiss the petition, ordered the Government to respond, set a hearing, and granted the motion to seal.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied the standard governing summary dismissal of habeas petitions and the Ninth Circuit standard for sealing judicial records, requiring compelling reasons for sealing filings more than tangentially related to the merits.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order

TOPICS

- immigration detention
- federal habeas corpus
- removal proceedings
- asylum
- immigration

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the § 2241 petition warranted summary dismissal at the initial review stage.
2. Whether Exhibit A to the petition should be filed under seal because it contained sensitive information concerning Petitioner's withholding-of-removal claim and the basis of persecution.

HOLDINGS

1. Summary dismissal was unwarranted at that time; the Government was required to respond to the petition and the court set a hearing.
2. The motion to seal Exhibit A was granted because the exhibit was more than tangentially related to the merits and compelling reasons existed to overcome the presumption of public access.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Summary dismissal is appropriate only where the allegations in the petition are vague or conclusory, palpably incredible, or patently frivolous or false.” (at 1)

“A party seeking to seal a judicial record bears the burden of overcoming the strong presumption of access.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Petitioner Hrachya Sakoyan alleged that he was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement in violation of immigration laws and *Zadvydas v. Davis*. He submitted an exhibit containing sensitive information about his claim for withholding of removal and the basis of persecution. The court determined that the petition was not vague, conclusory, palpably incredible, patently frivolous, or false on its face, and that compelling reasons supported sealing the exhibit.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Hrachya Sakoyan filed a § 2241 habeas petition alleging that Immigration and Customs Enforcement was detaining him in violation of immigration laws and *Zadvydas v. Davis*. He also moved to seal an exhibit containing sensitive information concerning his withholding-of-removal claim and the basis of persecution. The court found summary dismissal unwarranted at that stage, ordered a Government response and hearing, and granted the motion to seal.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678 (2001)
- *Kourteva v. INS*, 151 F. Supp. 2d 1126, 1128 (N.D. Cal. 2001)

- Foltz v. State Farm Mut. Auto. Ins. Co., 331 F.3d 1122, 1135 (9th Cir. 2003)
- Ctr. for Auto Safety v. Chrysler Grp., LLC, 809 F.3d 1092, 1101 (9th Cir. 2016)
- Doe v. Becerra, 787 F. Supp. 3d 1083, 1096 (E.D. Cal. 2025)

OPINION

Sakoyan

PER CURIAM.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

9 SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

10 11 HRACHYA SAKOYAN, Case No. 25-cv-03406-BAS-MSB 12 Petitioner, ORDER: 13 v.

(1) REQUIRING THE

14 KRISTI NOEM, et al.,

GOVERNMENT TO RESPOND

15 Respondents. TO PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS (ECF No. 1); 16

17 (2) SETTING HEARING ON

PETITION; AND

18

19 (3) GRANTING MOTION TO

SEAL (ECF No. 4)

20 21 22 Petitioner Hrachya Sakoyan filed a Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus pursuant to 23 28
U.S.C. § 2241. (ECF No. 1.) In his Petition, Petitioner claims that he is being detained 24 by
Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) in violation of immigration laws and 25 Zadvydas
v. Davis, 533 U.S. 678 (2001). (Id.) In addition, Petitioner filed a Motion to 26 Seal Exhibit A to
his Petition. (ECF No. 4.) 27 Having reviewed the Petition, the Court finds summary dismissal is
unwarranted at 28 this time. See Kourteva v. INS, 151 F. Supp. 2d 1126, 1128 (N.D. Cal. 2001)
 (“Summary 1 dismissal is appropriate only where the allegations in the petition are vague or
conclusory, 2 palpably incredible, or patently frivolous or false.”). Therefore, the Court will order
the 3 Government to respond to the Petition. 4 Further, the Court finds it appropriate to seal the
requested information. A party 5 seeking to seal a judicial record bears the burden of overcoming
the strong presumption of 6 access. Foltz v. State Farm Mut. Auto. Ins. Co., 331 F.3d 1122, 1135
(9th Cir. 2003). The 7 showing required to meet this burden depends upon whether the documents
to be sealed 8 relate to a motion that is “more than tangentially related to the merits of the case.”
Ctr. for 9 Auto Safety v. Chrysler Grp., LLC, 809 F.3d 1092, 1101 (9th Cir. 2016). If the filing
meets 10 this requirement, the “compelling reasons” standard applies. Id. Here, because Exhibit A
11 is part of the Petition, the relevant court filing is “more than tangentially related to the 12 merits
of the case.” See id. Even so, the Court finds compelling reasons exist to seal the 13 exhibit, as it
reveals sensitive information about Petitioner’s claim for withholding of 14 removal and the basis

of persecution. See *Doe v. Becerra*, 787 F. Supp. 3d 1083, 1096 15 (E.D. Cal. 2025) (sealing similar information concerning an asylum application). 16 Accordingly, the Court ORDERS as follows: 17 1. The Government must file a response to the Petition no later than December 18 12, 2025. The Government's response must address the allegations in the Petition and 19 must include any documents relevant to the determination of the issues raised in the 20 Petition. 21 2. Petitioner may file a reply in support of his Petition no later than December 22 19, 2025. 23 3. The parties must appear in Courtroom 12B on January 16, 2026, at 2:30 p.m. 24 for a hearing on the Petition. 25 4. The Court confirms appointment of Federal Defenders of San Diego, Inc., as 26 counsel for Petitioner under Chief Judge Order No. 134 (S.D. Cal. Nov. 18, 2025). 27 5. The Court GRANTS the Motion to Seal (ECF No. 4). The Clerk of Court 28 shall accept and file under seal Exhibit A to the Petition (ECF No. 5). I 6. The Clerk of Court shall provide the Civil Division of the U.S. Attorney's 2 || Office with a copy of the Petition (ECF No. 1) and this Order. 3 IT IS SO ORDERED. 4 5 || DATED: December 4, 2025 yatta Bahar 6 Hon. Cynthia Bashant, Chief Judge 4 United States District Court 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 Qe