

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
INDIANA, SOUTH BEND DIVISION

Khalif Abdul Mateen v. L. Smith, et al.

Mateen · No. 3:25-CV-299-CCB-SJF · Decided January 28, 2026

SUMMARY

The court screened Khalif Abdul Mateen’s prisoner civil-rights complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A. It concluded that the allegations concerning segregation conditions, disciplinary proceedings, Ramadan meals, fire-safety systems, and the grievance process did not state a constitutional claim, but granted Mateen leave to amend. The court ordered him to file an amended complaint by March 2, 2026, warning that failure to do so would result in dismissal.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, South Bend Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Cristal C. Brisco
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, South Bend Division
DECIDED	January 28, 2026
DOCKET	3:25-CV-299-CCB-SJF
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Pro se prisoner civil-rights complaint screened under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, the court must dismiss a prisoner complaint that is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief from an immune defendant. Pro se pleadings are liberally construed, but they must still plausibly state a claim.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district-court opinion; nonprecedential
PARTIES	Khalif Abdul Mateen v. L. Smith, Lt. Walton, Lt. Draper, Sgt. L. Smith, Warden Ron Neal, Executive Assistant Mark Newkirk, Alicia Wildfang

TOPICS

prisoners rights

due process

cruel and unusual punishment

section 1983

motion to amend

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

constitutional law

prisoner litigation

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Mateen's twelve-day placement in a special-management cell under the alleged conditions implicated a protected liberty interest under the Fourteenth Amendment.
2. Whether the conditions of Mateen's twelve-day special-management placement or his later confinement in D cell house stated an Eighth Amendment claim.
3. Whether Mateen alleged a procedural due-process violation in connection with his prison disciplinary proceedings and rehearing.
4. Whether the absence of injury documentation required by IDOC policy invalidated the disciplinary finding under the Constitution.
5. Whether the allegations concerning Ramadan meals, the absence of an Eid al-Fitr meal, fire-safety conditions, and the grievance process stated constitutional claims.

HOLDINGS

1. Mateen's initial twelve-day placement in a special-management cell was too short to implicate due-process protections, and the alleged conditions did not independently establish a constitutional violation.
2. The alleged conditions did not plausibly state an Eighth Amendment claim because they did not deny Mateen the minimal civilized measure of life's necessities or exceed contemporary bounds of decency.
3. Mateen did not state a procedural due-process claim because he did not identify a deficiency in the notice, hearing, opportunity to present evidence, written decision, or evidentiary support for the disciplinary finding.
4. The alleged failure to provide a photograph or other documentation of the officer's injury did not state a constitutional claim because the asserted requirement arose from IDOC policy rather than the Due Process Clause.
5. Those allegations did not state a constitutional claim; in particular, Mateen had no constitutional right to a grievance procedure, and he did not allege that the Ramadan food violated his religious beliefs or that a particular defendant was responsible for the alleged Establishment Clause violation.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"A document filed pro se is to be liberally construed, and a pro se complaint, however inartfully pleaded, must be held to less stringent standards than formal pleadings drafted by lawyers."

"atypical and significant hardship on the inmate in relation to the ordinary incidents of prison life." (515 U.S. at 484)

“Prison disciplinary proceedings are not part of a criminal prosecution, and the full panoply of rights due a defendant in such proceedings does not apply.”

“some evidence” (472 U.S. at 455)

“the prison officials’ act or omission must result in the denial of ‘the minimal civilized measure of life’s necessities.’”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Mateen, an Indiana prisoner, alleged that a correctional officer engaged in horseplay involving a roll of toilet paper, after which he was placed in a special-management cell for twelve days under harsh conditions. He was later charged with and found guilty of battery or nonconsensual sexual contact involving staff, received segregation and telephone restrictions, and had the finding vacated and reheard before another officer, who found him guilty of battery and imposed 365 days in segregation and a 45-day telephone restriction. Mateen also challenged conditions in another cell house, including fire-safety equipment, Ramadan meals, the absence of an Eid al-Fitr meal, and alleged deficiencies in the grievance process.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Mateen filed a complaint alleging constitutional violations arising from prison disciplinary proceedings, segregation, prison conditions, Ramadan meals, fire-safety conditions, and the grievance process. The court screened the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A and concluded that it failed to state a claim for relief. Rather than dismissing immediately, the court granted Mateen leave to file an amended complaint by March 2, 2026, and cautioned that failure to respond would result in dismissal.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Erickson v. Pardus, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007)
- Sandin v. Conner, 515 U.S. 472, 484 (1995)
- Jackson v. Anastasio, 150 F.4th 851, 858-59 (7th Cir. 2025)
- Marion v. Columbia Correctional Institution, 559 F.3d 693, 697-98 & nn.2-3 (7th Cir. 2009)
- Townsend v. Fuchs, 522 F.3d 765, 771 (7th Cir. 2008)
- Lekas v. Briley, 405 F.3d 602, 608-09, 612 (7th Cir. 2005)
- Isby v. Brown, 856 F.3d 508, 522, 524, 527 (7th Cir. 2017)
- Wilkinson v. Austin, 545 U.S. 209, 224 (2005)
- Toevs v. Reid, 685 F.3d 903, 913-14 (10th Cir. 2012)
- Wolff v. McDonnell, 418 U.S. 539, 556, 563-73 (1974)
- Superintendent, Massachusetts Correctional Institution v. Hill, 472 U.S. 445, 455 (1985)
- Rhodes v. Chapman, 452 U.S. 337, 347, 349 (1981)

- *Adams v. Pate*, 445 F.2d 105, 108-09 (7th Cir. 1971)
- *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825, 834 (1994)
- *Lunsford v. Bennett*, 17 F.3d 1574, 1579 (7th Cir. 1994)
- *Jackson v. Duckworth*, 955 F.2d 21, 22 (7th Cir. 1992)
- *Morissette v. Peters*, 45 F.3d 1119, 1123 (7th Cir. 1995)
- *Williams v. Berge*, 102 F. App'x 506, 507 (7th Cir. 2004)
- *Grieverson v. Anderson*, 538 F.3d 763, 770 (7th Cir. 2008)
- *Scott v. Edinburg*, 346 F.3d 752, 760 (7th Cir. 2003)
- *Abu-Shawish v. United States*, 898 F.3d 726, 738 (7th Cir. 2018)

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