

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Malkeet S. v. Christopher Chestnut, et al.

No. 1:26-cv-00045-TLN-JDP · No. No. 1:26-cv-00045-TLN-JDP · Decided January 8, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California construed Malkeet S.’s pro se petition under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 as a request for a temporary restraining order. The court ordered respondents to respond by noon on January 9, 2026, and prohibited transferring the petitioner outside the district pending further order. The court also granted in forma pauperis status and appointed counsel.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Troy L. Nunley
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	January 8, 2026
DOCKET	No. 1:26-cv-00045-TLN-JDP
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner, an immigration detainee proceeding pro se, filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241. The court construed the pleading as a motion for a temporary restraining order, granted interim injunctive relief against transfer, granted in forma pauperis status, and appointed counsel.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Malkeet S. v. Christopher Chestnut, et al.

TOPICS

- immigration detention
- federal habeas corpus
- injunctions
- civil procedure
- equitable relief

PRACTICE AREAS

- immigration law
- habeas corpus
- civil procedure
- injunctive relief

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the pro se § 2241 pleading should be construed, based on its substance and requested relief, as a motion for a temporary restraining order.
2. Whether the court should temporarily prohibit respondents from transferring petitioner outside the district to preserve the court's jurisdiction while the petition is pending.
3. Whether petitioner should be granted leave to proceed in forma pauperis.
4. Whether the interests of justice require appointment of counsel for petitioner.

HOLDINGS

1. The court construed petitioner's § 2241 pleading as a motion for a temporary restraining order because the substance of the brief and the relief requested sought immediate injunctive relief.
2. To ensure its jurisdiction to resolve the pending § 2241 petition, the court prohibited respondents from transferring petitioner to another detention center outside the judicial district pending further order.
3. The court granted petitioner's motion to proceed in forma pauperis.
4. The interests of justice required appointment of counsel for petitioner because of the complexity of the legal issues involved.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Based on the substance of Petitioner’s brief and the relief requested therein, the Court construes Petitioner’s pleading as a motion for a temporary restraining order.” (at 1)

“In order to ensure this Court’s jurisdiction to resolve the pending § 2241 petition, Respondent shall not transfer Petitioner to another detention center outside of this judicial district, pending further order of the Court;” (at 2)

“In light of the complexity of the legal issues involved, the Court has determined that the interests of justice require the appointment of counsel for Petitioner.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Petitioner Malkeet S. is an immigration detainee representing himself. He filed a § 2241 petition seeking relief that the court understood to include immediate injunctive relief and alleged matters requiring review of his immigration file and other records. The court ordered respondents to produce relevant portions of the A-File and available records concerning his allegations and temporarily barred transfer outside the district.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Malkeet S. filed a § 2241 habeas petition and motions to proceed in forma pauperis and for appointment of counsel. Based on the substance of the brief and the relief requested, the court construed the petition as a request for a temporary restraining order, ordered respondents to respond, prohibited transfer of petitioner outside the district pending further order, granted in forma pauperis status, and appointed counsel.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Estelle v. Gamble, 429 U.S. 97, 106 (1976)
- F.T.C. v. Dean Foods Co., 384 U.S. 597, 608 (1966)
- Weygandt v. Look, 718 F.2d 952, 954 (9th Cir. 1983)

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