

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
WASHINGTON

Dominguez-Ruiz v. Noem

No. 2:26-cv-00189-TMC (W.D. Wash. Jan. 27, 2026) · No. 2:26-cv-00189-TMC · Decided January 27, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Washington denied Amady Lazaro Dominguez-Ruiz’s motion for a temporary restraining order seeking immediate release from immigration detention and preventing his transfer. The court held that he had not shown a likelihood of irreparable harm because the habeas petition was already scheduled for prompt consideration and no facts indicated that a transfer was likely. The court noted that an existing scheduling order required advance notice before transfer or removal.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Washington
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Tiffany M. Cartwright
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Washington
DECIDED	January 27, 2026
DOCKET	2:26-cv-00189-TMC
DISPOSITION	denied
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner moved for a temporary restraining order seeking immediate release from immigration detention and an order preventing respondents from transferring him out of the Western District of Washington. The court denied the motion.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A party seeking a TRO must establish a likelihood of success on the merits, a likelihood of irreparable harm absent preliminary relief, that the balance of equities favors relief, and that an injunction is in the public interest. Under the Ninth Circuit's alternative serious-questions test, the party must show serious questions going to the merits, a sharply tipping balance of hardships, likely irreparable injury, and that the injunction is in the public interest. When the government is the opposing party, the balance-of-equities and public-interest factors merge.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	district court opinion; precedential status not specified

PARTIES

Amady Lazaro Dominguez-Ruiz v. Kristi Noem, et al.

TOPICS

immigration detention

injunctions

removal proceedings

due process

immigration

PRACTICE AREAS

immigration

immigration detention

civil procedure

injunctive relief

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether petitioner established the requirements for a temporary restraining order, particularly a likelihood of irreparable harm before adjudication of his habeas petition.
2. Whether petitioner was entitled to immediate release from immigration detention or additional transfer-related relief pending resolution of the habeas petition.

HOLDINGS

1. Petitioner was not entitled to a temporary restraining order because he failed to show a likelihood of irreparable harm in the absence of preliminary relief.
2. Petitioner was not entitled to additional transfer-related protections because he offered no evidence that transfer was likely, and the court's scheduling order already required at least 48 hours' notice before transfer or removal.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A party seeking a TRO “must establish that he is likely to succeed on the merits, that he is likely to suffer irreparable harm in the absence of preliminary relief, that the balance of equities tips in his favor, and that an injunction is in the public interest.”” (at 2)

“Motions for temporary restraining orders should be reserved for matters where the petitioner alleges imminent, irreparable harm, such as imminent removal from the United States.” (at 3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Amady Lazaro Dominguez-Ruiz, a Cuban citizen, entered the United States on May 17, 2022, was briefly detained, and was released after receiving a notice to appear. After an immigration judge dismissed his proceedings and placed him in expedited removal on May 27, 2025, he was re-detained and held at the Northwest Immigration and Customs Enforcement Processing Center. He alleged that his continued detention caused loss of physical liberty and economic harm from lost work, but offered no facts showing that those harms would intensify before the court decided his habeas petition or that a transfer was likely.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Petitioner filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus on January 18, 2026, alleging that his immigration detention violated due process and the Immigration and Nationality Act. The court then issued a scheduling

order requiring advance notice of any transfer or removal. Petitioner filed the TRO motion on January 27, 2026; the court denied it because he failed to establish likely irreparable harm before the court would decide the habeas petition on the merits.

DISPOSITION

denied

CASES CITED

- Winter v. Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc., 555 U.S. 7, 20 (2008)
- United States v. City of Seattle, 474 F. Supp. 3d 1181, 1185-87 (W.D. Wash. 2020)
- Drakes Bay Oyster Co. v. Jewell, 747 F.3d 1073, 1092 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Fraihat v. U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement, 16 F.4th 613, 635 (9th Cir. 2021)
- Alliance for the Wild Rockies v. Cottrell, 632 F.3d 1127, 1135 (9th Cir. 2011)

OPINION

Dominguez-Ruiz v. Noem

PER CURIAM.

1 2 3 4 5

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
6 WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT TACOMA

7 AMADY LAZARO DOMINGUEZ-RUIZ, Case No. 2:26-cv-00189-TMC 8 Petitioner, ORDER
DENYING MOTION FOR TRO 9 v. 10 KRISTI NOEM, et al., 11 Respondents. 12 13 14 This
matter comes before the Court on Petitioner’s motion for a temporary restraining 15 order
 (“TRO”). Dkt. 3. For the reasons described below, the Court DENIES the motion. 16 Petitioner is
a citizen of Cuba who has resided in the United States since he arrived on
17 May 17, 2022, and was released after a brief detention with a notice to appear. Dkt. 1 ¶¶ 15–16.
18 Petitioner was re-detained in immigration court after an Immigration Judge (“IJ”) dismissed his
19 proceedings and placed him in expedited removal on May 27, 2025. Id. ¶ 17. Petitioner is 20
currently detained at the Northwest Immigration and Customs Enforcement Processing Center 21
 (“NWIPC”). Id. ¶ 1. 22 On January 18, 2026, Petitioner filed a petition for writ of habeas corpus
arguing that his 23 detention violated his Due Process rights and the Immigration and Nationality
Act. Id. ¶¶ 23–46. 24 1 On January 20, the Court issued a scheduling order requiring Respondents
to provide 48 hours’ 2 notice before any attempt to transfer Petitioner out of this district or remove
him from the United 3 States. Dkt. 2. On January 27, Petitioner filed a motion for a temporary
restraining order 4 requiring his immediate release from custody and preventing Respondents from
transferring 5 Petitioner out of this district. Dkt. 3. 6 A party seeking a TRO “must establish that he
is likely to succeed on the merits, that he 7 is likely to suffer irreparable harm in the absence of

preliminary relief, that the balance of 8 equities tips in his favor, and that an injunction is in the public interest.” *Winter v. Nat. Res. Def. 9 Council, Inc.*, 555 U.S. 7, 20 (2008); *United States v. City of Seattle*, 474 F. Supp. 3d 1181, 1185 10 (W.D. Wash. 2020) (“The standard for issuing a TRO is the same as the standard for issuing a 11 preliminary injunction.”). When a party seeks a TRO against the government, the third and 12 fourth factors merge. *Drakes Bay Oyster Co. v. Jewell*, 747 F.3d 1073, 1092 (9th Cir. 2014). In 13 the Ninth Circuit, a party may also obtain a TRO by demonstrating “‘serious questions going to 14 the merits’ and a balance of hardships that tips sharply” in the party’s favor, so long as the party 15 also shows “that there is a likelihood of irreparable injury and that the injunction is in the public 16 interest.” *Frailhat v. U.S. Immigr. & Customs Enf’t*, 16 F.4th 613, 635 (9th Cir. 2021) (quoting 17 *All. for the Wild Rockies v. Cottrell*, 632 F.3d 1127, 1135 (9th Cir. 2011)); *City of Seattle*, 474 F.

18 Supp. 3d at 1185–87 (applying the “serious questions” standard to a request for a TRO).

19 Petitioner fails to show a likelihood of irreparable harm in the absence of preliminary 20 relief. The Court has scheduled briefing on the merits of his habeas petition and noted the 21 petition for consideration on February 9, 2026—less than two weeks from today. Dkt. 2. The 22 Court will address the petition promptly once the briefing is complete. Petitioner argues that 23 continued detention constitutes a loss of physical liberty and economic harm from loss of work.

24 Dkt. 3 at 2–3. But Petitioner fails to specify how these harms might intensify between now and 1 when the Court decides on the merits of the habeas petition. Instead, Petitioner’s TRO mostly 2 seeks to obtain the relief sought in his habeas petition on an expedited basis. As explained in this 3 Court’s General Order 10-25 on immigration habeas petitions, this type of filing is discouraged, 4 and “[m]otions for temporary restraining orders should be reserved for matters where the 5 petitioner alleges imminent, irreparable harm, such as imminent removal from the United 6 States.” General Order 10-25 (Dec. 18, 2025). This District is handling an unprecedented volume 7 of immigration habeas cases, all of which, by their very nature, concern petitioners who allege 8 they are unlawfully in custody. The filing of emergency motions in situations where there is not 9 imminent, irreparable harm does nothing but delay the overall adjudication of these important 10 cases. Furthermore, the Court’s scheduling order provides a procedure for either party to request 11 expedited briefing on the habeas petition (which Petitioner has not sought). See Dkt. 2 at 2–3. 12 Petitioner also provides no facts—such as any statements by NWIPC officials— 13 indicating that his transfer out of this district is likely. Consistent with General Order 10-25 and 14 this Court’s scheduling order, Respondents must provide Petitioner “least 48 hours’ notice (or 72 15 hours’ notice if the period extends into a weekend, holiday, or date the Court is closed) prior to 16 any action to move or transfer [him] from the Western District of Washington or to remove [him] 17 from the United States.” Dkt. 2 ¶ 3. This notice allows Petitioner and his counsel to seek 18 emergency relief if needed. No other protections are warranted now. 19 Because Petitioner has not met the standard for a TRO, the Court DENIES his motion.

20 Dkt. 3.

21 // 22 // 23 24 1 Dated this 27th day of January, 2026. 2 a 3 Tiffany M. Cartwright 4 United
States District Judge 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

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