

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Neiyerver Adrián Leon Rengel v. United States

Leon Rengel · No. 26-1008 (JEB) · Decided August 3, 2026

SUMMARY

The District Court for the District of Columbia held that venue was improper in an FTCA action brought by Neiyerver Adrián Leon Rengel concerning his detention and removal to El Salvador. The court concluded that the operative acts and omissions occurred in Texas, denied the plaintiff’s request for venue-related discovery, and transferred the case to the Southern District of Texas. The court’s opinion was issued per curiam by Chief Judge James E. Boasberg on August 3, 2026.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Columbia
WRITING FOR THE COURT	James E. Boasberg
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Columbia
DECIDED	August 3, 2026
DOCKET	26-1008 (JEB)
DISPOSITION	remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff brought Federal Tort Claims Act claims in the District of Columbia. The United States moved to dismiss for improper venue, and Plaintiff alternatively sought venue-related discovery.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a Rule 12(b)(3) motion, the court accepts well-pleaded factual allegations regarding venue as true, draws reasonable inferences in the plaintiff's favor, and resolves factual conflicts in the plaintiff's favor, but need not accept legal conclusions and may consider material outside the pleadings. The plaintiff bears the burden of establishing proper venue. Venue-related discovery is committed to the court's broad discretion and requires a showing that discovery could produce new, relevant information demonstrating proper venue.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published district court memorandum opinion; persuasive authority within the federal district court, subject to controlling circuit and Supreme Court precedent.
PARTIES	Neiyerver Adrián Leon Rengel v. United States

TOPICS

venue motions to dismiss civil procedure negligence intentional infliction of emotional distress

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure Federal Tort Claims Act torts immigration remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether venue for Plaintiff's FTCA claims was proper in the District of Columbia because federal officials there designed, directed, or supervised the challenged immigration actions.
2. Whether Plaintiff was entitled to venue-related discovery concerning the conduct and intent of federal officials in the District of Columbia.
3. Whether the case should be dismissed or transferred under 28 U.S.C. § 1406(a) after the court determined that venue was improper in the District of Columbia.

HOLDINGS

1. Venue was improper in the District of Columbia because Plaintiff resided in Venezuela and the substantial acts with operative significance underlying his claims occurred in Texas, San Salvador, or in transit between Texas and El Salvador, rather than in Washington, D.C.
2. Venue-related discovery was unwarranted because Plaintiff did not show that discovery would produce new, relevant information capable of changing the conclusion that the complained-of acts occurred outside the District of Columbia.
3. The case was transferred to the Southern District of Texas in the interest of justice rather than dismissed.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"When a plaintiff brings suit in an improper venue, the district court "shall dismiss [the case], or if it be in the interest of justice, transfer such case to any district or division in which it could have been brought." (at 6)

"The FTCA, however, is not a means for litigants to challenge federal policy in the abstract." (at 10)

"[T]he standard remedy for improper venue is to transfer the case to the proper court rather than dismissing it." (at 14)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Rengel, a Venezuelan national who had been living in Irving, Texas, was detained by immigration officers in March 2025 after officials interpreted his tattoos as indicating membership in Tren de Aragua. He was transferred to south Texas, removed from the United States through the Harlingen area, and flown to El Salvador despite allegedly requesting a hearing and being told he would be sent to Venezuela. He was imprisoned at CECOT for approximately four months, where he alleged beatings, harsh conditions, denial of medical care, and psychological mistreatment. He later filed FTCA claims seeking damages and declaratory relief.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Rengel filed suit in the District of Columbia on March 25, 2026, asserting negligence, intentional infliction of emotional distress, abuse of process, and false imprisonment under the Federal Tort Claims Act. The United States moved to dismiss for improper venue. The court denied the motion to dismiss, denied venue-related discovery, and transferred the action to the Southern District of Texas under 28 U.S.C. § 1406(a).

DISPOSITION

remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The action is transferred, rather than remanded, to the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas. The court denied the motion to dismiss and the motion for venue-related discovery.

CASES CITED

- J.G.G. v. Trump, 772 F. Supp. 3d 18, 26 (D.D.C. 2025)
- J.G.G. v. Trump, 813 F. Supp. 3d 126, 133-34 (D.D.C. 2025)
- J.G.G. v. United States, No. 25-766, ECF No. 195, ¶ 4 (D.D.C. Nov. 25, 2025)
- Bartel v. FAA, 617 F. Supp. 190, 198 (D.D.C. 1985)
- Pendleton v. Mukasey, 552 F. Supp. 2d 14, 17 (D.D.C. 2008)
- Braun v. U.S. Dep't of the Interior, 288 F. Supp. 3d 293, 298 (D.D.C. 2018)
- Ellis-Smith v. Sec. of Army, 793 F. Supp. 2d 173, 175 (D.D.C. 2011)
- Oppenheimer Fund, Inc. v. Sanders, 437 U.S. 340, 351 (1978)
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. v. Bivins, 215 F. Supp. 3d 12, 15-16 (D.D.C. 2016)
- Hussain v. Nicholson, 435 F.3d 359, 363 (D.C. Cir. 2006)
- Shaheen v. Smith, 994 F. Supp. 2d 77, 89 (D.D.C. 2013)
- GTE New Media Servs. Inc. v. BellSouth Corp., 199 F.3d 1343, 1351 (D.C. Cir. 2000)
- Naartex Consulting Corp. v. Watt, 722 F.2d 779, 789 (D.C. Cir. 1983)
- Goldlawr, Inc. v. Heiman, 369 U.S. 463, 466-67 (1962)
- Gill v. United States, 415 F. Supp. 3d 127, 142 (D.D.C. 2019)
- Lamont v. Haig, 590 F.2d 1124, 1134 (D.C. Cir. 1978)
- Hahn v. United States, 457 F. Supp. 2d 27, 29 (D.D.C. 2006)
- Williams v. United States, 932 F. Supp. 357, 363 (D.D.C. 1996)
- Reuber v. United States, 750 F.2d 1039, 1047 (D.C. Cir. 1985)
- Kauffman v. Anglo-Am. Sch. of Sofia, 28 F.3d 1223 (D.C. Cir. 1994)
- Sanchez ex rel. Rivera-Sanchez v. United States, 600 F. Supp. 2d 19, 21, 23 (D.D.C. 2009)
- Patel v. Phillips, 933 F. Supp. 2d 153, 165 (D.D.C. 2013)
- Attkisson v. Holder, 241 F. Supp. 3d 207, 213 (D.D.C. 2017)

- Franz v. United States, 591 F. Supp. 374, 378 (D.D.C. 1984)
- Cameron v. Thornburgh, 983 F.2d 253, 256 (D.C. Cir. 1993)
- Laukus v. United States, 691 F. Supp. 2d 119, 127 (D.D.C. 2010)
- Nat'l Wildlife Fed'n v. Browner, 237 F.3d 670, 674 (D.C. Cir. 2001)

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