

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Mason v. C.D.C.R. Officers

No. 23-cv-02888-RFL (PR) (N.D. Cal. Sept. 8, 2025) · No. 23-cv-02888-RFL (PR) · Decided September 8, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California partially grants and partially denies defendants’ motions to dismiss Joshua Mason’s 42 U.S.C. § 1983 Eighth Amendment claims concerning post-surgery medical care and transportation. The court dismisses the claims against Drs. Yeh and Lara with leave to amend, while allowing claims against Martinez, Ssempebwa, Godbe, Cienega, Acevedo, and Gonzalez to proceed. The court also grants Mason’s motion to extend the deadline for filing his opposition.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	September 8, 2025
DOCKET	23-cv-02888-RFL (PR)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff brought a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action alleging that prison medical and security personnel were deliberately indifferent to his serious medical needs after knee surgery. Defendants moved to dismiss the third amended complaint under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6).
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, the court accepts well-pleaded allegations as true and determines whether the complaint contains enough facts to state a claim for relief that is plausible on its face. The court generally considers only the contents of the complaint and not new allegations raised in an opposition brief.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Joshua Mason v. Kenneth Lalas, Yeh, Lara, Cienega, Martinez, Ssempebwa, Godbe, Acevedo, Gonzalez, Salcedo

TOPICS

motions to dismiss

section 1983

prisoners rights

civil rights

health law

PRACTICE AREAS

prisoner civil rights

constitutional torts

civil procedure

medical care liability

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the third amended complaint plausibly alleged that Yeh and Lara knew of Mason's postoperative medical restrictions and deliberately disregarded a substantial risk of serious harm.
2. Whether the allegations that Martinez, Ssempebwa, Godbe, and Cienega denied care, took Mason's pain medication, and laughed at him while he had an infected, bleeding wound stated an Eighth Amendment claim.
3. Whether the allegations that Acevedo and Gonzalez knew of Mason's postoperative restrictions and transported him without an appropriate lift-equipped vehicle stated an Eighth Amendment claim.
4. Whether allegations raised for the first time in Mason's opposition briefs could be considered in deciding the Rule 12(b)(6) motions.

HOLDINGS

1. The third amended complaint did not allege sufficient specific facts showing that Yeh and Lara knew of Mason's postoperative condition or the surgeon's instructions, and therefore failed to state a deliberate-indifference claim against them.
2. The allegations that these defendants denied medical care to Mason while he had an infected wound that would not stop bleeding, took away his medications, and laughed at him were sufficient to state a claim for relief.
3. The allegations that Acevedo and Gonzalez knew of the surgeon's postoperative instructions, observed Mason on crutches, and transported him without an appropriate lift-equipped van stated a plausible claim for relief.
4. The court could not consider new factual allegations presented only in Mason's opposition briefs for purposes of deciding the Rule 12(b)(6) motions.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A motion to dismiss under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) should be granted if the complaint does not proffer “enough facts to state a claim for relief that is plausible on its face.”” (Standard of Review)

“A prison official is deliberately indifferent under the Eighth Amendment if he knows that a prisoner faces a substantial risk of serious harm and disregards that risk by failing to take reasonable steps to abate it.” (Discussion § A.1)

“The prison official must not only “be aware of facts from which the inference could be drawn that a substantial risk of serious harm exists,” but “must also draw the inference.”” (Discussion § A.1)

“Failure to file a proper amended complaint by November 3, 2025, will result in dismissal with prejudice of the claims against Yeh and Lara.” (Conclusion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Mason underwent left-knee surgery on January 6, 2022, and alleged that the surgeon instructed prison personnel to provide a lower bunk and lower-tier housing, avoid walking and weight-bearing, and provide proper wound care. He alleged that prison staff transported him without appropriate accommodations, required or allowed him to use stairs, failed to provide wound care, and withheld pain medication, resulting in additional injury, infection, and severe pain. He specifically alleged that Yeh and Lara failed to ensure appropriate accommodations and paperwork, that Martinez, Ssempebwa, Godbe, and Cienega denied care during an episode involving bleeding and infection, and that Acevedo and Gonzalez transported him in an unsuitable van despite knowledge of the postoperative instructions.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Mason's original complaint was dismissed with leave to amend because it failed to identify defendants, locations, and sufficient facts supporting Eighth Amendment claims. After several amendments and an extension of time, Mason filed a third amended complaint. The court granted in part and denied in part one motion to dismiss, denied a second motion to dismiss, dismissed the claims against Yeh and Lara with leave to amend, and allowed the claims against the other moving defendants to proceed subject to repleading.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)
- Balistreri v. Pacifica Police Department, 901 F.2d 696, 699 (9th Cir. 1990)
- Scott v. Kuhlmann, 746 F.2d 1377, 1378 (9th Cir. 1984)
- Schneider v. CDCR, 151 F.3d 1194, 1197 n.1 (9th Cir. 1998)
- Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825, 837 (1994)
- McGuckin v. Smith, 974 F.2d 1050, 1060 (9th Cir. 1992)
- Sandoval v. County of San Diego, 985 F.3d 657, 668 (9th Cir. 2021)
- Gibson v. County of Washoe, 290 F.3d 1175, 1188 (9th Cir. 2002)
- Ferdik v. Bonzelet, 963 F.2d 1258, 1262 (9th Cir. 1992)