

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Torres v. St. Andre, et al.

Torres · No. 2:24-cv-2447-JDP (P) · Decided August 4, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California dismisses plaintiff Abraham L. Torres’s prisoner civil-rights complaint with leave to amend. The court finds that the complaint is difficult to understand, fails to provide each of eighteen defendants fair notice of the claims, and includes retaliation claims that do not appear sufficiently related to the medical-care claims. Plaintiff is given thirty days to file an amended complaint or voluntarily dismiss the action.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Jeremy D. Peterson
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	August 4, 2025
DOCKET	2:24-cv-2447-JDP (P)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Prisoner civil-rights action screened under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A; the court dismissed the complaint with leave to amend.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Statutory screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A; failure-to-state-a-claim and pleading sufficiency standards under Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 8(a)(2) and 12(b)(6)-type plausibility principles.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Abraham L. Torres v. St. Andre, et al.

TOPICS

- pleadings
- civil procedure
- prisoners rights
- section 1983
- motions to dismiss

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- prisoner civil rights
- pleading sufficiency
- federal court screening

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint satisfied the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure by providing each defendant fair notice of the claims and the grounds on which relief was sought.
2. Whether the complaint stated claims sufficiently related to one another to proceed in the same action.
3. Whether the complaint should be dismissed under the prisoner-screening requirements of 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, and whether leave to amend should be granted.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint failed to comply with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8 because its disorganized, repetitive, and unclear allegations did not give each defendant fair notice of the claims asserted against that defendant.
2. The retaliation claims arising from alleged December 2024 conduct did not appear sufficiently related to the claims concerning inadequate medical care to proceed in the same action.
3. The complaint was dismissed with leave to amend, and plaintiff was given a final opportunity to file an intelligible complaint complying with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Accordingly, I will dismiss the complaint with leave to amend, so that plaintiff may file an intelligible complaint that complies with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.” (at 1)

“Based on these deficiencies, the pleading fails to give each defendant fair notice of the claims against him or her, as the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure require.” (at 2)

“These claims do not appear sufficiently related to his other claims for inadequate medical care to proceed in the same suit.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleged that he contracted COVID-19 in August 2024 after being forced to share a cell with an infected inmate. He asserted claims against eighteen defendants, but the complaint lacked coherent paragraphing and claim organization, repeated allegations, and did not clearly identify how each defendant was involved. Plaintiff also alleged that defendants retaliated against him in December 2024 by destroying his property, placing him in a holding cage for an extended period, and imposing other adverse consequences.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a complaint against eighteen defendants alleging violations of his rights, including claims arising from contracting COVID-19 after being housed with an infected inmate and later retaliation claims. On screening, the district court found the pleading unintelligible, insufficiently organized to provide fair notice, and apparently joined claims that were not sufficiently related. The court dismissed the complaint with leave to amend and permitted plaintiff either to file an amended complaint or voluntarily dismiss the action without prejudice.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678-679 (2009)
- Kobold v. Good Samaritan Reg'l Med. Ctr., 832 F.3d 1024, 1038 (9th Cir. 2016)
- Nagrampa v. MailCoups, Inc., 469 F.3d 1257, 1264 n.2 (9th Cir. 2006) (en banc)
- Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972) (per curiam)
- Hayes v. Idaho Corr. Ctr., 849 F.3d 1204, 1208 (9th Cir. 2017)
- Bruns v. Nat'l Credit Union Admin., 122 F.3d 1251, 1257 (9th Cir. 1997)
- Ivey v. Bd. of Regents, 673 F.2d 266, 268 (9th Cir. 1982)
- Lacey v. Maricopa County, 693 F.3d 896, 907 n.1 (9th Cir. 2012) (en banc)

OPINION

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 9 FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA 10 11 ABRAHAM L. TORRES, Case No. 2:24-cv-2447-JDP (P) 12 Plaintiff, 13 v.
14 ST. ANDRE, et al., 15 Defendants. 16 17 18 Plaintiff brings this action against eighteen
different defendants and alleges numerous 19 violations of his rights. It is difficult to understand
the precise number of claims at issue, whether 20 those claims are all sufficiently related, and how
each of the eighteen named defendants is 21 implicated in those claims.

Accordingly, I will dismiss the complaint with leave to amend, so that 22 plaintiff may file an
intelligible complaint that complies with the Federal Rules of Civil 23 Procedure. 24 Screening
Order 25 I. Screening and Pleading Requirements 26 A federal court must screen a prisoner's
complaint that seeks relief against a governmental 27 entity, officer, or employee.

See 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a). The court must identify any cognizable 28 claims and dismiss any
portion of the complaint that is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a 1 claim upon which relief
may be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is 2 immune from such relief. See
28 U.S.C. §§ 1915A(b)(1), (2). 3 A complaint must contain a short and plain statement that
plaintiff is entitled to relief, 4 Fed.

R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2), and provide “enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its 5
face,” Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007). The plausibility standard does not 6
require detailed allegations, but legal conclusions do not suffice. See Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 7
662, 678 (2009). If the allegations “do not permit the court to infer more than the mere 8
possibility of misconduct,” the complaint states no claim.

Id. at 679. The complaint need not identify “a precise legal theory.” *Kobold v. Good Samaritan Reg’l Med. Ctr.*, 832 F.3d 1024, 1038 (9th Cir. 2016). Instead, what plaintiff must state is a “claim”—a set of “allegations that give rise to an enforceable right to relief.” *Nagrampa v. MailCoups, Inc.*, 469 F.3d 1257, 1264 n.2 (9th Cir. 2006) (en banc) (citations omitted).

The court must construe a pro se litigant’s complaint liberally. See *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972) (per curiam). The court may dismiss a pro se litigant’s complaint “if it appears beyond doubt that the plaintiff can prove no set of facts in support of his claim which would entitle him to relief.” *Hayes v. Idaho Corr. Ctr.*, 849 F.3d 1204, 1208 (9th Cir.

2017). However, “a liberal interpretation of a civil rights complaint may not supply essential elements of the claim that were not initially pled.” *Bruns v. Nat’l Credit Union Admin.*, 122 F.3d 1251, 1257 (9th Cir. 1997) (quoting *Ivey v. Bd. of Regents*, 673 F.2d 266, 268 (9th Cir. 1982)). II. Analysis Plaintiff names eighteen defendants in the caption of his complaint and alleges that his rights were violated in August 2024 when he contracted Covid-19 after being forced to lodge in a cell with an infected inmate.

The complaint is difficult to read owing, in part, to organization. While the complaint is typed, plaintiff has not used paragraphs or divided his claims in any coherent manner. This might be an inconvenience in a case with a limited number of defendants, but it makes following the allegations exceptionally difficult when they are being levied against eighteen individuals.

Additionally, plaintiff has several sections where allegations repeat, and it is unclear to me whether this is an error, intended for effect, or if these are, in some way I cannot grasp, meant to be separate claims.

For instance, pages five, eight, and ten—each of which denotes the start of a new claim—all begin by alleging that plaintiff’s cellmate contracted the Covid-19 virus and go on to describe alleged wrongdoing by various officers and medical staff. Based on these deficiencies, the pleading fails to give each defendant fair notice of the claims against him or her, as the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure require.

Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 6 U.S. 544, 555 (2007). As a final matter, plaintiff also brings claims alleging that, in December 2024, defendants retaliated against him for protected conduct by destroying his property, keeping him in a holding cage for an extended period, and subjecting him to other adverse consequences. Id. at 18. These claims do not appear sufficiently related to his other claims for inadequate medical care to proceed in the same suit.

Accordingly, I will dismiss the complaint and afford plaintiff a final opportunity to amend so that he may remedy these deficiencies. He is advised that the amended complaint will supersede the current complaint. See *Lacey v. Maricopa County*, 693 F.3d 896, 907 n.1 (9th Cir. 2012) (en banc).

The amended complaint should be titled “Third Amended Complaint” and refer to the appropriate case number. 17 It is ORDERED that: 18 1. Plaintiff’s complaint, contained in ECF No. 17, is DISMISSED with leave to amend. 19 2. Within thirty days from service of this order, plaintiff shall file either (1) an amended 20 complaint or (2) notice of voluntary dismissal of this action without prejudice.

21 3. Failure to timely file either an amended complaint or notice of voluntary dismissal may 22 result in the imposition of sanctions, including a recommendation that this action be dismissed 23 with prejudice pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b). 24 4.

The Clerk of Court shall send plaintiff a complaint form with this order. 25 26 27 28 1 > IT IS SO ORDERED. 3 (| { Wine Dated: _ August 4, 2025 q—— 4 JEREMY D. PETERSON 5 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28