

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

Dariam Gonzalez Espinosa v. Todd Lyons, et al.

Gonzalez Espinosa v. Lyons · No. 2:26-cv-00945 (JXN); Civil Action No. 26-945 (JXN) · Decided January 30, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of New Jersey addresses a § 2241 habeas petition challenging the petitioner’s detention, along with requests for an order to show cause and a temporary restraining order. The court denies the order-to-show-cause request without prejudice, directs the respondents to answer under the Habeas Rules, and grants the TRO solely to prohibit the petitioner’s transfer from his current New Jersey detention facility during the proceedings.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of New Jersey
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Julien Xavier Neals
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of New Jersey
DECIDED	January 30, 2026
DOCKET	2:26-cv-00945 (JXN); Civil Action No. 26-945 (JXN)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner filed a counseled petition for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 challenging his detention, requested an order to show cause, and moved for a temporary restraining order. The court screened the petition under Rule 4 of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases, applicable to § 2241 proceedings through Rule 1(b), declined to dismiss without an answer and record, denied the order-to-show-cause request without prejudice, and granted limited temporary injunctive relief.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On habeas screening, the court applied Rule 4 of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases as made applicable to § 2241 proceedings. For temporary injunctive relief, the court applied the four-factor test requiring likely success on the merits, irreparable harm, consideration of comparative harm, and consistency with the public interest.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished, nonprecedential district court memorandum and order

TOPICS

federal habeas corpus immigration detention injunctions pleadings civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

federal habeas corpus immigration detention injunctive relief civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court was required to issue an order to show cause under the three-day response period in 28 U.S.C. § 2243 or could apply the more flexible response procedures authorized by Rule 4 of the Habeas Rules.
2. Whether Petitioner was entitled to a temporary restraining order preventing his transfer from his current detention facility in New Jersey.
3. What responsive pleadings and records Respondents were required to file in response to the § 2241 petition.

HOLDINGS

1. Rule 4 of the Habeas Rules, applicable to § 2241 proceedings through Rule 1(b), provides the court with flexible time limits for ordering an answer and supersedes the conflicting response-time provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 2243. The request for an order to show cause under § 2243 was therefore denied without prejudice, while Respondents were ordered to answer under the Habeas Rules.
2. The court granted the motion for a temporary restraining order solely to the extent that Respondents were enjoined from transferring Petitioner from his current detention facility in New Jersey during the pendency of the proceedings.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Injunctive relief is an extraordinary remedy and should be granted only in limited circumstances.”

“The primary purpose of a preliminary injunction is the maintenance of the status quo until a decision on the merits of a case is rendered.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Petitioner Dariam Gonzalez Espinosa was detained by Respondents and sought habeas relief challenging that detention. He also sought to prevent Respondents from transferring him from his current detention facility in New Jersey during the proceedings.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The petition was filed in the District of New Jersey and challenged Petitioner's detention. Before requiring an answer, the court addressed Petitioner's request for an order to show cause under 28 U.S.C. § 2243 and his motion to prevent transfer and further detention. The court directed Respondents to answer the petition within fourteen days, produce the administrative record and relevant documents, and permitted Petitioner to reply.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Iremashvili v. Rodriguez, No. 15-6320, 2017 WL 935441, at *2 (D.N.J. Mar. 9, 2017)
- Capozzi v. Federal Bureau of Prisons, No. 21-19533, 2021 WL 5881587, at *1 (D.N.J. Dec. 13, 2021)
- Schumaker v. Knight, 23-20834, 2024 WL 866347, at *1 (D.N.J. Feb. 29, 2024)
- Sempier v. Johnson & Higgins, 45 F.3d 724, 736 (3d Cir. 1995)
- United States v. Christian, 660 F.2d 892, 899 (3d Cir. 1981)
- Penfield Co. of California v. SEC, 330 U.S. 585, 589 n.5 (1947)
- International Foodsource, LLC v. Grower Direct Nut Co., No. 16-3140, 2016 WL 4150748, at *6 (D.N.J. Aug. 3, 2016)
- Westchester Fire Insurance Co. v. Global Real Construction, LLC, No. 09-0207, 2009 WL 137414, at *1 (D.N.J. Jan. 20, 2009)
- Kos Pharmaceuticals, Inc. v. Andrx Corp., 369 F.3d 700, 708 (3d Cir. 2004)
- Spectrum Produce Distributors, Inc. v. Fresh Marketing, Inc., No. 11-6368, 2011 WL 13063669, at *2 (D.N.J. Nov. 1, 2011)
- Acierno v. New Castle County, 40 F.3d 645, 647 (3d Cir. 1994)
- Punnett v. Cater, 621 F.2d 578, 582 (3d Cir. 1980)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY DARIAM GONZALEZ ESPINOSA, Petitioner, Civil Action No. 26-945 (JXN) v. MEMORANDUM AND ORDER TODD LYONS, et al., Respondents. NEALS, District Judge Before the Court is Petitioner Dariam Gonzalez Espinosa's ("Petitioner") counseled Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus ("Petition") pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241, challenging his detention (ECF No. 1), a request for an Order to Show Cause ("OTSC") (id. at 21), and a Motion for Temporary Restraining Order ("TRO") (ECF No. 2).

Petitioner has paid the \$5.00 filing fee. In accordance with Rule 4 of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases ("Habeas Rules"), which is applicable to § 2241 cases through Rule 1(b) of the Habeas Rules, this Court has screened the Petition for dismissal and determined that dismissal without an answer and the record is not warranted. Petitioner requests an OTSC, relying on 28 U.S.C. § 2243.

(ECF No. 1 at 21.) Section 2243 states that "the writ... shall be returned within three days unless for good cause additional time, not exceeding twenty days, is allowed." Multiple courts in this District have found that Rule 4 of the Habeas Rules, applicable to § 2241 cases through Rule 1(b)

of the Habeas Rules, provides the Court with more flexible time limits for ordering an answer and supersedes the time limits of 28 U.S.C. § 2243 to the extent there is a conflict.¹ See *Iremashvili v. Rodriguez*, No. 15-6320, 2017 WL 935441, at *2 (D.N.J.

Mar. 9, 2017); *Capozzi v. Fed. Bureau of Prisons*, No. 21-19533, 2021 WL 5881587, at *1 (D.N.J. Dec. 13, 2021); *Schumaker v. Knight*, 23-20834, 2024 WL 866347, at *1 (D.N.J. Feb. 29, 2024). The Court agrees and denies Petitioner's request for an Order to Show Cause under § 2243, as it directs Respondents to answer the Petition pursuant to its authority under the Habeas Rules.

Petitioner requests a TRO ordering enjoining Petitioner's transfer and further detention. (See generally ECF Nos. 2, 2-1). Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 65 governs TROs and preliminary injunctions. "If there is a possibility that irreparable injury will occur before the hearing on a preliminary injunction required by Rule 65(a) can be held, a temporary restraining order may be available under Rule 65(b)." *Int'l Foodsource, LLC v. Grower Direct Nut Co.*, No. 16-3140, 2016 WL 4150748, at *6 (D.N.J.

Aug. 3, 2016). Such "[i]njunctive relief is an extraordinary remedy and should be granted only in limited circumstances." See *Westchester Fire Ins. Co. v. Glob. Real Constr., LLC*, No. 09-0207, 2009 WL 137414, at *1 (D.N.J. Jan. 20, 2009) (quoting *Kos Pharm. Inc. v. Andrx Corp.*, 369 F.3d 700, 708 (3d Cir. 2004)). A court may grant temporary restraints only if a party shows: "(1) that it will likely succeed on the merits; (2) that it will suffer irreparable harm if the injunction is denied; (3) that granting preliminary relief will not result in even greater harm to the nonmoving party; and (4) that the public interest favors such relief." *Spectrum Produce Distrib., Inc. v. Fresh Mktg., Inc.*, No. 11-6368, 2011 WL 13063669, at *2 (D.N.J.

Nov. 1, 2011). The primary purpose of a preliminary injunction is the maintenance of 1 Federal procedural rules, which are promulgated by the U.S. Supreme Court and approved by Congress, have the force of statute. See 28 U.S.C. § 2072; *Sempier v. Johnson & Higgins*, 45 F.3d 724, 736 (3d Cir. 1995); *United States v. Christian*, 660 F.2d 892, 899 (3d Cir. 1981).

Indeed, § 2072 explicitly states that "[a]ll laws in conflict with such rules shall be of no further force or effect after such rules have taken effect." 28 U.S.C. § 2072(b). And "[w]here a Rule of Civil Procedure conflicts with a prior statute, the Rule prevails." *Penfield Co. of Cal. v. SEC*, 330 U.S. 585, 589 n.5 (1947). the status quo until a decision on the merits of a case is rendered.

See *Acierno v. New Castle Cnty.*, 40 F.3d 645, 647 (3d Cir. 1994). Where the movant seeks to alter the status quo, that party must meet a heavy burden. See *Punnett v. Cater*, 621 F.2d 578, 582 (3d Cir. 1980). Here, enjoining Respondents from transferring Petitioner from his current detention facility will maintain the status quo.

Therefore, the Court will grant the TRO solely to the extent that Respondents are enjoined from transferring Petitioner from his current detention facility in New Jersey. Accordingly, IT IS, on this

30th day of January 2026, ORDERED that the Clerk of the Court shall serve a copy of the Petition (ECF No. 1) and this Order upon Respondents by regular mail, with all costs of service advanced by the United States; it is further ORDERED that the Clerk of the Court shall forward a copy of the Petition (ECF No. 1) and this Order to the Chief, Civil Division, United States Attorney's Office, at the following email address: USANJ-HabeasCases@usdoj.gov; it is further ORDERED that the Motion for an OTSC (ECF No. 1 at 21) is DENIED without prejudice in light of the Court's Order directing Respondents to answer the Petition under the Habeas Rules; it is further ORDERED that Motion for a TRO (ECF No. 2) is GRANTED solely to the extent the Respondents are enjoined from transferring Petitioner from his current detention facility in New Jersey during the pendency of these proceedings; it is further ORDERED that within fourteen (14) days of the date of the entry of this Order, Respondents shall electronically file a full and complete answer to said Petition, which responds to the factual and legal allegations of the Petition paragraph by paragraph; and it is further ORDERED that the answer shall state the statutory authority for Petitioner's detention, see 28 U.S.C. § 2243, and provide the relevant legal analysis and record evidence supporting the asserted statutory basis for detention; it is further ORDERED that Respondents shall raise by way of the answer any appropriate defenses which Respondents wish to have the Court consider, including, but not limited to, exhaustion of administrative remedies, and also including, with respect to the asserted defenses, relevant legal arguments with citations to appropriate legal authority; it is further ORDERED that Respondents shall electronically file with the answer certified copies of the administrative record and all other documents relevant to Petitioner's claims; it is further ORDERED that all exhibits to the Answer must be identified by a descriptive name in the electronic filing entry, for example: "Exhibit #1 Transcript of [type of proceeding] held on XX/XX/XXXX" or "Exhibit #2 Opinion entered on XX/XX/XXXX by Judge YYYY"; it is further ORDERED that Petitioner may file and serve a reply in support of the Petition within fourteen (14) days after the answer is filed; it is further ORDERED that within seven (7) days of Petitioner's release, be it transfer to supervised release or otherwise, Respondents shall electronically file a written notice of the same with the Clerk of the Court; and it is further ORDERED that the Clerk of the Court shall serve a copy of the Order upon the parties electronically. _____ JULIEN XAVIER NEALS United States District Judge