

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Luis Alberto Alarcon Nava v. Gavin Newsom

Case No. 25-cv-03508-RFL · No. 25-cv-03508-RFL · Decided November 12, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California dismissed Luis Alberto Alarcon Nava’s 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint with leave to amend. The court found that the complaint did not adequately address the statute of limitations, identify the correctional and medical officials allegedly responsible, or establish supervisory liability against Governor Gavin Newsom. The court ordered an amended complaint by December 15, 2025, and explained that any habeas claim concerning a Kern County conviction must be filed separately in the Eastern District of California.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Rita F. Lin
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	November 12, 2025
DOCKET	25-cv-03508-RFL
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	A pro se state prisoner filed a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint against the Governor of California. The district court conducted mandatory prisoner screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A and dismissed the complaint with leave to amend.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Mandatory preliminary screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A; the court determines whether the complaint is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim, or seeks monetary relief from an immune defendant. Pro se pleadings are liberally construed, but must contain sufficient factual matter to state a facially plausible claim.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order
PARTIES	Luis Alberto Alarcon Nava v. Gavin Newsom

TOPICS

statute of limitations

section 1983

prisoners rights

civil procedure

pleadings

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

prisoner civil rights

civil procedure

constitutional law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint stated a timely § 1983 claim based on alleged excessive force and deliberate indifference to serious medical needs.
2. Whether the complaint adequately identified defendants and alleged each defendant's personal participation or causation under § 1983.
3. Whether the claim against Governor Newsom could proceed based solely on his supervisory position and alleged knowledge of prison conditions.
4. Whether the attached challenge to a 2012 conviction could be pursued in this § 1983 action in the Northern District of California.

HOLDINGS

1. Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, the court must screen a prisoner's complaint seeking relief from a governmental entity or officer and dismiss claims that are frivolous, malicious, fail to state a claim, or seek monetary relief from an immune defendant.
2. The complaint failed to allege facts showing that the claims arising from the April 2017 incident were timely filed; applying California's two-year personal-injury limitations period and the maximum two-year imprisonment tolling period, the claims presumptively expired in April 2021.
3. A § 1983 complaint must identify the individual defendants, describe each defendant's specific acts or omissions, and allege causation connecting each defendant to the constitutional deprivation.
4. Governor Newsom could not be held liable under § 1983 solely because he supervised the California prison system; the complaint failed to allege that he participated in, directed, or knowingly failed to prevent the alleged violations.
5. Any request for habeas relief concerning Nava's 2012 Kern County conviction must be presented in a separate habeas petition filed in the Eastern District of California rather than as part of this § 1983 action.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A “complaint must contain sufficient factual matter, accepted as true, to ‘state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.’” (Discussion A)

“The complaint must therefore be dismissed for failure to allege facts showing that the claim was brought within the statute of limitations.” (Discussion C)

“Supervisory defendants are not responsible simply because they are supervisors. There is no respondeat superior liability under Section 1983.” (Discussion C)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

In April 2017, while incarcerated, Nava experienced a trauma episode in a prison yard. He alleged that correctional officers mocked him, restrained and pushed him, and that one officer struck him in the face while he was handcuffed, causing injuries including a fractured wrist. He further alleged that prison personnel delayed medical treatment and did not provide the surgery recommended for his wrist. Nava named only Governor Gavin Newsom based on his supervisory position over California prisons.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Nava alleged that correctional officers used excessive force against him in April 2017, failed to obtain timely medical care, and that prison medical personnel failed to provide wrist surgery. He filed this action in March 2025 and named only Governor Gavin Newsom. The court concluded that the complaint did not adequately address the statute of limitations or identify defendants who personally participated in the alleged constitutional violations, and dismissed with leave to amend by December 15, 2025.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Balistreri v. Pacifica Police Dep’t*, 901 F.2d 696, 699 (9th Cir. 1988)
- *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 676-83 (2009)
- *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 556, 570 (2007)
- *Clegg v. Cult Awareness Network*, 18 F.3d 752, 754-55 (9th Cir. 1994)
- *West v. Atkins*, 487 U.S. 42, 48 (1988)
- *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 824, 834 (1994)
- *Wilson v. Seiter*, 501 U.S. 294, 297-98 (1991)
- *Hudson v. McMillian*, 503 U.S. 1, 6-7 (1992)
- *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 104 (1976)
- *McGuckin v. Smith*, 974 F.2d 1050, 1059 (9th Cir. 1992)
- *WMX Techs., Inc. v. Miller*, 104 F.3d 1133, 1136 (9th Cir. 1997) (en banc)
- *Toguchi v. Chung*, 391 F.3d 1051, 1058-60 (9th Cir. 2004)
- *Wilson v. Garcia*, 471 U.S. 261, 276 (1985)
- *Jones v. R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co.*, 541 U.S. 369, 377-78 (2004)
- *TwoRivers v. Lewis*, 174 F.3d 987, 991-92 (9th Cir. 1999)
- *Maldonado v. Harris*, 370 F.3d 945, 954 (9th Cir. 2004)
- *Wallace v. Kato*, 549 U.S. 384, 388 (2007)
- *Leer v. Murphy*, 844 F.2d 628, 633 (9th Cir. 1988)
- *Johnson v. Duffy*, 588 F.2d 740, 743 (9th Cir. 1978)

- Keates v. Koile, 883 F.3d 1228, 1241 (9th Cir. 2018)
- Taylor v. List, 880 F.2d 1040, 1045 (9th Cir. 1989)
- Ferdik v. Bonzelet, 963 F.2d 1258, 1262 (9th Cir. 1992)

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