

NONPRECEDENTIAL DISPOSITION

To be cited only in accordance with FED. R. APP. P. 32.1

United States Court of Appeals**For the Seventh Circuit****Chicago, Illinois 60604**

Submitted April 21, 2026*

Decided April 22, 2026

BeforeKENNETH F. RIPPLE, *Circuit Judge*DIANE S. SYKES, *Circuit Judge*REBECCA TAIBLESON, *Circuit Judge*

No. 25-1235

QUENNEL T. AUGUSTA,
*Plaintiff-Appellant,*Appeal from the United States District
Court for the Central District of Illinois.*v.*

No. 23-cv-04235

JEREMY S. KARLIN, et al.,
*Defendants-Appellees.*Sara Darrow,
*Judge.***ORDER**

Quennel Augusta, an Illinois prisoner, appeals the judgment dismissing his civil-rights action because he disregarded court instructions. We affirm.

According to police reports attached to his complaint, Augusta was arrested twice in Galesburg, Illinois, in 2023. The first time officers pulled him over after he rolled past a stop sign. A search of his car led to charges for driving with an expired

* We have agreed to decide the case without oral argument because the briefs and record adequately present the facts and legal arguments, and oral argument would not significantly aid the court. FED. R. APP. P. 34(a)(2)(C).

license and various drug- and alcohol-related offenses. The second time, less than three months later, officers stopped Augusta for driving a vehicle with an invalid registration plate. The officers searched Augusta, recovered marijuana and what the officers presumed to be cocaine, and arrested him for possessing a controlled substance with intent to deliver.

After the State of Illinois initiated criminal proceedings, Augusta filed suit in federal court under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against four police officers (who, he alleged, subjected him to unlawful stops, searches, and seizures) as well as a state's attorney and two Knox County Circuit Court judges (who, he claimed, denied him due process during his criminal prosecutions). Augusta also asserted that his status as a sovereign citizen made him immune from prosecution. He sought damages and asked that the defendants be fired from their jobs and criminally prosecuted for what he described as "act[s] of terrorism."

The district judge screened the complaint, dismissed Augusta's claims for injunctive relief under *Younger v. Harris*, 401 U.S. 37 (1971), and stayed his claims for damages pending resolution of the state criminal proceedings. The judge noted that it was "not particularly clear" which arrests or prosecutions Augusta meant to highlight, but a search of the public docket revealed six state criminal cases pending against him. The judge instructed Augusta to file status reports every 60 days informing the court of developments in all six cases and warned him that the failure to do so could result in the dismissal of his case.

Over the next two months, Augusta filed two status reports. But neither report complied with the court's instructions. The first mentioned only two of the six cases for which the judge requested updates, and the second mentioned only one case. Neither report addressed whether any of the cases had been resolved.

In a follow-up order, the judge denied what Augusta styled as a "motion to dismiss defendants" (because he had not properly served any defendant) and a motion for reconsideration (because he gave no reason for the court to reconsider its prior order). The judge reiterated that the case remained stayed and directed Augusta to provide status reports on the relevant cases by June 4, warning him again that his failure to do so might result in dismissal. Three weeks later, Augusta filed a status report that mentioned only two cases and asserted that the defendants had violated his constitutional rights.

Several weeks later, the judge called for another status report. She directed Augusta to report on the status of the six cases “no earlier than August 6, 2024 and no later than August 13, 2024,” unless a case was resolved—in which event Augusta would have to file a report within a week of the case’s resolution. Augusta filed three status reports in June and July, none of which indicated that any of his cases had been resolved (despite the State’s apparently having dismissed one of his cases in June). He also submitted an affidavit arguing that defendants violated his right to a speedy trial.

Approximately three months later, the judge asked for another status report, this time with a deadline of December 9. She admonished Augusta that his status reports “should simply indicate whether the cases remain pending” and not include any argument. The judge reminded Augusta that failure to comply with these instructions might result in dismissal of his suit with prejudice. Despite the warning, Augusta’s next status report alleged a violation of his right to due process. And three weeks later, without leave of court, he filed an amended complaint.

By this time the judge had seen enough, and she dismissed Augusta’s case with prejudice under her inherent authority to sanction conduct that abuses the judicial process. The judge stated that Augusta had “violated nearly every direction to file reports updating the court on the status of his state cases.” She summarized his pattern of disregarding court orders: Since mid-2024, he had not filed status reports in the correct time frame; he did not inform the court when one of his cases was resolved; and he consistently argued in status reports that his constitutional rights were being violated in the state cases.

Augusta appeals, arguing that the judge erred by dismissing the case without sufficient warning. This sanction, he asserts, was not proportionate to his misconduct; he insists that he missed only one deadline and that his status reports merely quoted legal authorities and did not contain improper argument.

District courts have an inherent power to sanction conduct that abuses the judicial process. *See Fuery v. City of Chicago*, 900 F.3d 450, 452 (7th Cir. 2018). Dismissal is an appropriate sanction where a party has repeatedly failed to comply with a judge’s orders and “has been warned that noncompliance may lead to dismissal.” *Pendell v. City of Peoria*, 799 F.3d 916, 917 (7th Cir. 2015). Although pro se litigants should be afforded latitude in litigation, they do not have “unbridled license to disregard clearly communicated court orders.” *DJM Logistics, Inc. v. FedEx Ground Package Sys., Inc.*, 39 F.4th 408, 415 (7th Cir. 2022) (quotation omitted). We review for abuse of discretion the sanction of dismissing a suit. *Pendell*, 799 F.3d at 917.

No. 25-1235

Page 4

The judge here acted well within her discretion to dismiss the suit based on Augusta's repeated noncompliance with her orders. Three times she warned Augusta that his case could be dismissed if he did not file status reports as directed, and yet he again and again filed reports that were untimely or failed to address whether the cases were pending. Even after he was warned not to include legal argument in his filings, he still filed a status report and an amended complaint, both of which included argumentation. As the district court found, this conduct amounted to a "pattern of disregarding the court's orders," and dismissal as a sanction was justified.

We have considered Augusta's other arguments, and they do not merit discussion.

AFFIRMED