

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA
Richmond Division**

LEONARD NAJACQUE,

Petitioner,

v.

Civil Action No. **3:23CV518 (RCY)**

VERGAKIS,


Respondent.

MEMORANDUM OPINION

Leonard Najacque, a Virginia inmate proceeding *pro se*, brings this petition pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254 (“§ 2254 Petition,” ECF No. 5). Before a state prisoner can bring a § 2254 petition in federal district court, the prisoner must first have “exhausted the remedies available in the courts of the State.” 28 U.S.C. § 2254(b)(1)(A). Exhaustion is accomplished by presenting the claims to the Supreme Court of Virginia for review either on direct appeal or in a collateral proceeding. Najacque’s submissions failed to indicate that he had presented his claims for relief to the Supreme Court of Virginia by either direct review or by collateral review. Accordingly, by Memorandum Order entered on September 22, 2023, the Court directed Petitioner to show cause, within twenty (20) days of date of entry hereof, as to why his § 2254 Petition should not be dismissed for lack of exhaustion. Najacque has not filed a response. Accordingly, Najacque’s § 2254 Petition and the action will be **DISMISSED WITHOUT PREJUDICE** because he has failed either to demonstrate that he has exhausted available state remedies or that exceptional circumstances warrant consideration of his petition at this juncture. A certificate of appealability will be **DENIED**.

An appropriate Order will accompany this Memorandum Opinion.

Date: October 26, 2023
Richmond, Virginia



Roderick C. Young
United States District Judge