

*This opinion is nonprecedential except as provided by
Minn. R. Civ. App. P. 136.01, subd. 1(c).*

**STATE OF MINNESOTA
IN COURT OF APPEALS
A25-0741**

In the Matter of:
Lansa Bakala Dawano, petitioner,
Appellant,

vs.

Gameda Tufa,
Respondent.

**Filed December 22, 2025
Affirmed
Worke, Judge**

Hennepin County District Court
File No. 27-DA-FA-24-3376

Kathleen Gomez, Gomez Law PLLC, Otsego, Minnesota (for appellant)

Charles Clas Jr., Wilson & Clas, Minneapolis, Minnesota (for respondent)

Considered and decided by Bond, Presiding Judge; Worke, Judge; and Jesson,
Judge.*

NONPRECEDENTIAL OPINION

WORKE, Judge

Appellant argues that the district court abused its discretion by denying her request
for a 20-year extension of an order for protection (OFP). We affirm.

* Retired judge of the Minnesota Court of Appeals, serving by appointment pursuant to
Minn. Const. art. VI, § 10.

FACTS

The parties divorced in 2022. Before the divorce was finalized, the district court issued an OFP protecting appellant Lansa Bakala Dawano from respondent Gamede Tufa, which expired in April 2023.

Dawano lives in Minnesota, and Tufa lives out of state. When Tufa was granted supervised parenting time, Dawano applied for a subsequent OFP on June 5, 2024. Dawano alleged that, in March 2024, Tufa sent her messages on social media. In one message, Tufa stated: “I am aware of your address . . . your number . . . and who you talk to.” She stated that she felt “unsafe” because she had changed her address and phone number and tried to keep her information confidential. She was unsure as to how Tufa obtained her information. Dawano also claimed that Tufa attempted to call her three times in 2021 and twice in 2022. Dawano asserted that she is in fear because Tufa has physically harmed her, threatened her with weapons, and verbally threatened her and her children.

Following a hearing, the district court granted Dawano an OFP. The district court found that the attempted phone calls were “not enough to persuade the [c]ourt that an OFP [was] still warranted.” But the district court was “more troubl[ed]” by the social-media messages. The district court stated that, while the content of the messages related to parenting time and could be seen as ordinary parenting communications, the history of abuse made it reasonable for Dawano to believe the messages were threatening. The district court stated that it considered all of the circumstances, including the length of time since the last OFP, the nature of the issues that have arisen, and the potential need for

parenting communications. It determined that an OFP expiring on March 31, 2025, would provide protection, “while not making the length of restriction longer than necessary.”

On March 7, 2025, Dawano filed for a 20-year extension of the OFP. In her application, Dawano included the incidents that she described in her first application.

The district court held a hearing on April 29, 2025. Dawano testified that Tufa violated the 2021 OFP by sending her the social-media messages. Dawano testified that she installed a security system in her home. The system has been triggered, which has caused Dawano to feel fear because Tufa told her that he knows her address. Dawano testified that she is worried every time parenting time is scheduled because Tufa abused her physically, mentally, and emotionally, even when she was pregnant.

Dawano testified that the divorce decree includes examples of Tufa’s abuse. She described one incident when Tufa attacked her. She said that Tufa “was very drunk and in the process of hitting [her] and punching [her], he also ended up hitting [their] baby that [she] was holding at the time and ended up fracturing [the baby’s] head.”

On cross-examination, Dawano admitted that she did not have proof that Tufa triggered her home security system. When asked when Tufa last contacted her, Dawano replied that she has “received blocked calls, unknown calls, but [she] . . . [doesn’t] know if that’s [Tufa].” Dawano agreed that Tufa has parenting time and that they have to coordinate that time. She testified that the parties use OurFamilyWizard to communicate about parenting time, and she understands that their conversations are recorded.

Tufa testified that one of Dawano’s family members gave him Dawano’s address so that he would know where his children were living. Tufa testified that he visits Minnesota

for community gatherings and has been in Minnesota many times since Dawano has had an OFP against him and has never tried to make in-person contact. Tufa testified that the calls Dawano is receiving from an unknown caller are not from him. He stated that, since the last hearing, he has not attempted to contact Dawano.

The district court dismissed the OFP. The district court found that Dawano was unable to identify incidents involving improper conduct since the last OFP. The district court found that Tufa credibly testified that he visits Minnesota regularly but has not had direct contact with Dawano or attempted to go to her home. The district court concluded: “The evidence did not demonstrate that the [c]ourt’s determination of an appropriate sunseting date for the OFP after four years was no longer appropriate based on the current record.” This appeal followed.

DECISION

Dawano argues that the district court abused its discretion by denying her request for a 20-year extension of an OFP because she proved that more than one OFP had been issued, and that Tufa violated the OFP. She claims that the past abuse should be enough evidence for an extension.

This court reviews the district court’s decision to deny an OFP for an abuse of discretion. *Ekman v. Miller*, 812 N.W.2d 892, 895 (Minn. App. 2012). “A district court abuses its discretion if its findings are unsupported by the record or if it misapplies the law.” *Pechovnik v. Pechovnik*, 765 N.W.2d 94, 98 (Minn. App. 2009) (quotation omitted). We review the district court’s findings for clear error. *Ekman*, 812 N.W.2d at 895. A district court’s findings are clearly erroneous if they are “manifestly contrary to the weight

of the evidence or not reasonably supported by the evidence as a whole.” *Id.* (quotation omitted). We review the record in an OFP proceeding “in the light most favorable to the district court’s findings, and . . . will reverse . . . only if . . . left with the definite and firm conviction that a mistake has been made.” *Braend ex rel. Minor Child. v. Braend*, 721 N.W.2d 924, 927 (Minn. App. 2006) (quotation omitted). This court defers to the district court’s credibility determinations and does not reconcile conflicting evidence. *Pechovnik*, 765 N.W.2d at 99.

A district court may extend an existing OFP upon a showing that:

- (1) the respondent has violated a prior or existing [OFP];
- (2) the petitioner is reasonably in fear of physical harm from the respondent;
- (3) the respondent has engaged in the act of harassment within the meaning of section 609.749, subdivision 2; or
- (4) the respondent is incarcerated and about to be released, or has recently been released from incarceration.

Minn. Stat. § 518B.01, subd. 6a(b) (2024). “A petitioner does not need to show that physical harm is imminent to obtain an extension or a subsequent order under this subdivision.” *Id.* A district court may extend an OFP “for a period of up to 50 years, if the court finds: (1) the respondent has violated a prior or existing [OFP] on two or more occasions; or (2) the petitioner has had two or more orders for protection in effect against the same respondent.” *Id.*, subd. 6a(c) (2024). The use of the word “may” leaves the decision to grant relief to the discretion of the district court. *See* Minn. Stat. § 645.44, subd. 15 (2024) (providing that use of the word “[m]ay” in Minnesota statutes is “permissive”).

Here, the district court found that an extension of the OFP was unnecessary based on the current circumstances and the safeguards implemented with OurFamilyWizard, which records communications. The district court noted that the only evidence of contact was the social-media messages. In the first OFP order, the district court indicated that the social-media communication could be seen as normal discourse in a coparenting situation. The district court had also stated that an OFP extending until March 31, 2025, would provide protection, “while not making the length of restriction longer than necessary.”

The district court found that Dawano failed to describe any contact since the last OFP was issued. This finding is supported by the record. Dawano testified that she received phone calls from an unknown caller but admitted that she did not know if the caller was Tufa. Dawano was also unable to say if Tufa triggered her home security system. And Tufa denied calling Dawano or going to her home. The district court found Tufa to be credible, and we defer to this credibility determination. *See Pechovnik*, 765 N.W.2d at 99.

The record shows that the district court considered everything—the past abuse, the prior OFPs, the new parenting-time arrangement, and the lack of evidence of recent contact. The district court prudently provided a thorough analysis that balanced the statute with the length of the OFP. Because the record supports the district court’s findings, it did not abuse its discretion by denying Dawano’s OFP extension application.

Affirmed.