

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 03.02.2016

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE DR.JUSTICE S.TAMILVANAN
and
THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE D.HARIPARANTHAMAN

H.C.P.No.3122/2015

Durairaj

.. Petitioner

vs.

1.The State of Tamil Nadu,
rep. by its Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise (XVI) Department,
Fort St. George, Secretariat,
Chennai 600 009.

2.The District Collector and
District Magistrate of Krishnagiri,
Krishnagiri District.

.. Respondents

Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, praying to issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus calling for the records in connection with the order of detention passed by the 2nd respondent dated 09.07.2015 in his office Ref. S.C.No.71/2015 against the petitioner's son, by name, Tamizharasan, son of Durairaj, aged about 28 years, now confined at Central Prison, Salem, Salem District and set aside the same and direct the respondents to produce the above said detenu before this Court and set him at liberty.

For petitioner : Mr.E.Kannadasan

For respondents: Mr.A.N.Thambidurai, APP

O R D E R

(Order of the Court made by S.TAMILVANAN, J.)

Petitioner, who is the father of the detenu Tamizharasan, son of Durairaj, aged about 28 years, has filed this petition challenging the order of detention passed by the 2nd respondent in S.C.No.71/2015 dated 09.07.2015, branding the detenu as a "Goonda" under the Tamil Nadu Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Drug Offenders, Forest Offenders, Goondas, Immoral Traffic Offenders, Sand Offenders, Slum Grabbers and Video Pirates Act, 1982 [Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982].

2. Even though the learned counsel for the petitioner raised many grounds in assailing the impugned order of detention in the petition, he confined his arguments only to the ground of delay in considering the representation of the detenu, dated 26.11.2015. According to the learned counsel for the petitioner, the representation dated 26.11.2015, has been received by the Government on 10.12.2015; the remarks were called on 11.12.2015. But the said remarks were received only on 22.12.2015; after a delay of eleven days. He adds that though the file was submitted to the Under Secretary on 22.12.2015, the Minister has dealt with the said file of the detenu only on 11.01.2016, with a further delay of twenty days and the rejection letter was sent to the detenu only on 12.01.2016. It is his further submission that as per the Proforma submitted by the learned Additional Public Prosecutor, there were four intervening holidays and even after giving concession as to the intervening holidays, still there is a delay of seven days, which remains unexplained. The unexplained delay in considering the representation of the detenu vitiates the detention order. In support of his contention, the learned counsel for the petitioner relied on the judgment of the Hon'ble Apex Court in *Rajammal vs. State of Tamil Nadu*, reported in (1999) 1 SCC 417.

3. Resisting the contention of the learned counsel for the petitioner, learned Additional Public Prosecutor submitted that the Government received the representation on 10.12.2015 and that was forwarded to the Detaining Authority, calling for remarks on 11.12.2015 and remarks were received by the Government on 22.12.2015 and ultimately, the representation was considered and rejected on 12.01.2016 and the result of the consideration was communicated to the detenu on 16.01.2016. Therefore, according to the learned Additional Public Prosecutor, there is no inordinate delay in considering the representation of the detenu and therefore, he prayed for dismissal of the petition.

4. We have considered the rival submissions carefully with regard to facts and citation and perused the materials available on record.

5. As per the Proforma submitted by the learned Additional Public Prosecutor, on the representation of the detenu, dated 26.11.2015 which was received by the Government on 10.12.2015, remarks have been called for from the detaining authority on 11.12.2015. But, remarks have been received by the Government only on 22.12.2015 and the case of the detenu was dealt with by the Minister only on 11.01.2016, i.e., after a delay of twenty days and thereafter, the representation has been considered by the authorities concerned and rejected on 12.01.2016. From the above, it is clear that in between 11.12.2015 and 22.12.2015,

there is a delay of eleven days. Even if we give concession to the four intervening holidays, namely 12.12.2015, 13.12.2015, 19.12.2015 and 20.12.2015, still there is a delay of seven days, which remain unexplained.

6.It is trite law that the representation should be very expeditiously considered and disposed of with a sense of urgency and without avoidable delay. Any unexplained delay in the disposal of the representation would be a breach of the constitutional imperative and it would render the continued detention impermissible and illegal. From the records produced, we find that no acceptable explanation has been offered for the delay of seven days. Therefore, we have to hold that the delay has vitiated further detention of the detenu.

7.In the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Rajammal's case (cited supra), it has been held as follows:

"It is a constitutional obligation of the Government to consider the representation forwarded by the detenu without any delay. Though no period is prescribed by Article 22 of the Constitution for the decision to be taken on the representation, the words "as soon as may be " in clause (5) of Article 22 convey the message that the representation should be considered and disposed of at the earliest."

8.As per the dictum laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in above cited Rajammal's case, number of days of delay is immaterial and what is to be considered is whether the delay caused has been properly explained by the authorities concerned. But, here seven days delay has not been properly explained at all.

9.Further, in a recent decision in Ummu Sabeena vs. State of Kerala - 2011 STPL (Web) 999 SC, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has held that the history of personal liberty, as is well known, is a history of insistence on procedural safeguards. The expression 'as soon as may be', in Article 22(5) of the Constitution of India clearly shows the concern of the makers of the Constitution that the representation, made on behalf of the detenu, should be considered and disposed of with a sense of urgency and without any avoidable delay.

10.In the light of the above fact and law, we have no hesitation in quashing the order of detention on the ground of delay on the part of the Government in disposing of the representation of the detenu.

11. Accordingly, the habeas corpus petition is allowed and the detention order in S.C.No.71/2015 dated 09.07.2015, passed by the 2nd respondent is quashed. The detenu is directed to be set at liberty, forthwith, unless his presence is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-
Assistant Registrar(CS VI)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

To

1.The State of Tamil Nadu,
rep. by its Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise (XVI) Department,
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Chennai 600 009.

2.The District Collector and
District Magistrate of Krishnagiri,
Krishnagiri District.

3.The Public Prosecutor,
High Court,
Madras.

4.The Superintendent of Central Prison,
Salem.

H.C.P.No.3122/2015

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srg(17/02/2016)

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