



WEB COPY

**BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT**

**DATED : 23.09.2020**

**CORAM:**

**THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE K.KALYANASUNDARAM**

**and**

**THE HONOURABLE MRS.JUSTICE T.KRISHNAVALLI**

**H.C.P. (MD) No.264 of 2020**

Lawrence @ Paei Lawrence

... Petitioner

-vs-

1.The Additional Chief Secretary to Government,  
State of Tamil Nadu,  
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,  
Secretariat, Chennai-600 009.

2.The District Magistrate and District Collector,  
Office of the District Magistrate and District Collector,  
Dindigul District,  
Dindigul.

3.The Superintendent of Prison,  
Madurai Central Prison,  
Madurai District.

... Respondents

**PRAYER** : Petition is filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying for the issue of a Writ of Habeas Corpus calling for the records, connected with the detention order of the Respondent No.2 in Detention Order No.18/2020 dated 09.03.2020 and quash the same and to direct the Respondents to produce the body or person of the detenu by name Lawrence @ Paei Lawrence son of Franchis, aged about 49 years, now confined as Drug Offender at Madurai Central Prison before this Honourable Court and set him at liberty forthwith.

For Petitioner : Mr.R.Prakash

For Respondents : Mr.V.Neelakandan  
Additional Public Prosecutor

**O R D E R**

**(Order of the Court was made by K.KALYANASUNDARAM, J.)**

This habeas corpus petition has been filed by the detenu, namely, Lawrence @ Paei Lawrence, son of Franchis, aged about 49 years, challenging the detention order in Detention Order No.18 of 2020, dated 09.03.2020, passed by the second respondent, branding him as "Drug Offender" as contemplated under Section 2(e) of the Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982.



2. Mr.R.Prakash, learned counsel for the petitioner, would argue that even though the petitioner has raised several grounds, he has confined his arguments only to the delay in disposal of the petitioner's representation. It is submitted by the learned counsel for the petitioner that the procedural safeguards guaranteed under Articles 21 and 22 of the Constitution of India have not been followed in this case and there is unexplained and inordinate delay in disposal of the petitioner's representation, which would vitiate the impugned order of detention.

3. Mr.V.Neelakandan, learned Additional Public Prosecutor, on instructions, submitted that after satisfying with the materials placed by the Sponsoring Authority, the Detaining Authority has passed the detention order and there is no illegality or infirmity in the detention order. It is also stated that even if there is any delay in disposal of the representation, it has not caused any prejudice to the rights of the detenu and hence, prayed for dismissal of the habeas corpus petition.

4. Heard both sides and perused the materials available on record.

5. In the instant case, the proforma furnished by the learned Additional Public Prosecutor would indicate that as against the impugned detention order, the petitioner made a representation to the first respondent on 14.03.2020 and it was received on 18.03.2020. Remarks were called for on 19.03.2020 and it was received on 14.05.2020. The Deputy Secretary dealt with the matter on 14.05.2020. The concerned Minister dealt with the matter on 25.05.2020 and the representation came to be rejected on 26.05.2020. It is seen that in between 19.03.2020 and 14.05.2020, there was a delay of 56 days, after excluding the Government Holidays of 21 days, there was a delay of 35 days in considering the petitioner's representation.

6. At this juncture, it is useful to refer the decision of the Honourable Apex Court in the case of ***Rajammal vs. State of Tamil Nadu and another***, reported in ***1999 (1) SCC 417***, wherein the Apex Court has observed and held that it is for the Authority concerned to explain the delay, if any, in disposal of the representation and if any delay was caused on account of nay indifference or lapse in considering the representation, such delay will adversely affect further detention of the prisoner.

7. In the case on hand, as stated supra, the delay of 35 days in considering the representation of the petitioner remains unexplained by the respondents. Hence, in our considered view, the detention order is liable to be set aside solely on the ground of delay by following the decision of the Honourable Apex Court referred supra.



8. In fine, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed. The detention order in Detention Order No. 18 of 2020, dated 09.03.2020, passed by the second respondent, is set aside. Consequently, the detenu, namely, Lawrence @ Paei Lawrence, son of Franchis, aged about 49 years, who is now detained at Central Prison, Madurai is directed to be released forthwith unless his presence or custody or detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar (Records)

// True Copy //

/ /2020

Sub Assistant Registrar(CS)

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**Note** :In view of the present lock down owing to COVID-19 pandemic, a web copy of the order may be utilized for official purposes, but, ensuring that the copy of the order that is presented is the correct copy, shall be the responsibility of the advocate/litigant concerned.

To:

- 1.The Additional Chief Secretary to Government,  
State of Tamil Nadu,  
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,  
Secretariat, Chennai-600 009.
- 2.The District Magistrate and District Collector,  
Office of the District Magistrate and District Collector,  
Dindigul District,Dindigul.
- 3.The Superintendent of Prison,  
Madurai Central Prison,  
Madurai District.
- 4.The Additional Public Prosecutor,  
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,Madurai.
- 5.The Joint Secretary to Government  
Public(law & order),  
Fort St.George, Chennai-9

**ORDER MADE IN**

**H.C.P. (MD) No.264 of 2020**

**23.09.2020**

**MA (CO)**

**AP (07/10/2020) 3P 6C**

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