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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FINANCE
(DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE)
8th Floor, World Trade Centre, Centre - I, Cuffe Parade,
Mumbai-400 005

F.No. 373/63/B/2018-RA/2109

Date of Issue 28.11.2018

ORDER NO. 87/2018-CUS (SZ)/ASRA/MUMBAI DATED 22.10.2018 OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PASSED BY SHRI ASHOK KUMAR MEHTA , PRINCIPAL COMMISSIONER & EX-OFFICIO ADDITIONAL SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, UNDER SECTION 129DD OF THE CUSTOMS ACT, 1962.

Applicant : Shri Najumudeen Jawaharshariff

Respondent : Commissioner of Customs, (Airport), Chennai.

Subject : Revision Application filed, under Section 129DD of the Customs Act, 1962 against the Order-in-Appeal C. Cus I No. 204/2017 dated 27.12.2017 passed by the Commissioner of Customs (Appeals), Chennai.



ORDER

This revision application has been filed by Shri Najumudeen Jawaharshariff (herein referred to as Applicant) against the order C. Cus I No. 204/2017 dated 27.12.2017 passed by the Commissioner of Customs (Appeals), Chennai.

2. Briefly stated the facts of the case are that the applicant, was bound for Dubai and was intercepted at the Chennai Airport on 09.07.2017. Examination of his baggage and person resulted in the recovery of 50 notes of Saudi Riyals of 500 each totally equivalent to Rs. 4,17,500/- (Rupees Four lakhs Seventeen thousand Five hundred) kept in his hand baggage.

3. After due process of the law vide Order-In-Original No. 382/2017-18-AIRPORT dated 21.09.2017 the Original Adjudicating Authority ordered absolute confiscation of the currency under Section 113 (d) & (e) of the Customs Act.1962 read with Foreign Exchange Management (Export and Import of currency) Regulations, 2015 and imposed a penalty of Rs. 45,000/- under Section 114 of the Customs Act, 1962. Aggrieved by the said order, the applicant filed appeal before the Commissioner (Appeals) who vide Order-In-Appeal C. Cus I No. 204/2017 dated 27.12.2017 rejected the appeal of the applicant.

4. Aggrieved with the above order the Applicant has filed this revision application interalia on the grounds that;

4.1 the order of the Commissioner (Appeals) is against law, weight of evidence and circumstances and probabilities of the case; Currency is considered as goods as under section 2(22) of the Customs Act, 1962 and the same is neither dutiable nor prohibited; Goods must be prohibited before import or export simply because of non declarations goods cannot become prohibited.; The Adjudication authority has not exercised his option under section 125 of the Customs Act,1962; The Applicant has retracted the statements given earlier; There is no contumacious conduct on part of the Applicant but a conduct of a person who is ignorant of the law; In spite of informing the officers of the aforementioned details the officers have recorded that the Saudi Riyals recovered did not belong to him and the same was given to him by some unknown person; The averments that he received currency from some unknown sources is based on non existent material and also amounts to extraneous consideration; Even assuming without admitting the act of the Applicant is only a violation of the reserve Bank



rules; There is no requirement under the said Act to declare currency less than \$10,000/- and the seized currency is in permissible limits; the Apex court in the case of Hargovind Das vs Collector Of Customs 1992 (61) ELT 172 (SC) and several other cases has pronounced that the quasi judicial authorities should use the discretionary powers in a judicious and not an arbitrary manner and option to allow redemption is mandatory; The Applicant further pleaded that in a reported judgement 2012 (276) ELT 129 (GOI) in the case of Chellani Mukesh the Hon'ble Revisionary Authority had set aside absolute confiscation and allowed redemption of the of the same under section 125 of the Customs Act,1962; In the case of Peringatil Hamza vs Commissioner of Customs , Mumbai 2014 (309) E.L.T. 259(Tri- Mumbai in the seizure of Rs. 24 lakhs of currency the redemption fine of 10% and penalty of Rupees 2 lakhs was found appropriate.

5.3 The Revision Applicant cited various other assorted judgments and boards policies in support of his case and prayed for quashing the impugned order in Appeal with consequential benefits by means of redemption fine and reduce the personal penalty and thus render justice.

6. A personal hearing in the case was held on 25.09.2018, the Advocate for the respondent Shri S. Palanikumar attended the hearing he re-iterated the submissions filed in Revision Application and pleaded for release of the currency on reduced redemption fine and penalty. Nobody from the department attended the personal hearing.

7. The Government has gone through the case records it is observed that the Applicant had kept the currency in his hand baggage and did not declare the same and therefore confiscation of the same is justified. However, the facts of the case state that the Applicant has not been involved in such offences earlier. The currency was not indigenously concealed. There is also no requirement to declare currency below \$10,000, and taking of currency abroad is restricted and not prohibited. Absolute confiscation is therefore a harsh option, and unjustifiable. There are a catena of judgments which align with the view that the discretionary powers vested with the lower authorities under section 125(1) of the Customs Act, 1962 have to be exercised. The Applicant has pleaded for release of the currency on redemption fine and penalty and the Government is inclined to accept the plea.

The impugned Order in Appeal therefore needs to be modified and the currency is liable to be allowed on payment of redemption fine and penalty.



8. In view of the above, Government allows redemption of the confiscated currency in lieu of fine. The impugned currency totally valued at Rs. 4,17,500/- (Rupees Four lakhs Seventeen thousand Five hundred) is ordered to be redeemed on payment of redemption fine of Rs. 2,00,000/- (Rupees Two Lakhs) under section 125 of the Customs Act, 1962. Government also observes that the facts of the case justify reduction in the penalty imposed. The penalty imposed on the Applicant is therefore reduced from Rs. 45,000/- (Rupees Forty Five thousand) to Rs. 40,000/- (Rupees Forty thousand) under section 112(a) of the Customs Act,1962.

9. The impugned Order in Appeal is modified as detailed above. Revision application is partly allowed on above terms.

10. So, ordered.

(Handwritten Signature)
22X/16

(ASHOK KUMAR MEHTA)
Principal Commissioner & ex-officio
Additional Secretary to Government of India

ORDER No.827/2018-CUS (SZ) /ASRA/

DATED 22-10-2018

To,

Shri Najumudeen Jawaharshariff
C/o S. Palanikumar, Advocate,
No. 10, Sunkurama Chetty Street,
Opp High court, 2nd Floor,
Chennai - 600 001.

ATTESTED

B. LOKANATHA REDDY
Deputy Commissioner (R.A.)

Copy to:

1. The Commissioner of Customs, Chennai
2. The Commissioner of Customs (Appeals) Chennai
3. Sr. P.S. to AS (RA), Mumbai.
- ✓ 4. Guard File.
5. Spare Copy.

