

**IN THE COURT OF APPEAL OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI
LANKA**

In the matter of an application in the nature of a Writ of Certiorari made under and in terms of Article 140 of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

A.H.T. Premasiri

B-29, Danyagama Housing Scheme,
China Bay.

CA Writ Application No:177/2019

Petitioner

Vs.

Jebaraj Krishnamoorthy

Food Commissioner
Food Commissioner's Department
330, Union Place,
Colombo 02.

Respondent

Before : Sobhitha Rajakaruna, J.
Dhammika Ganepola, J.

Counsel : Saliya Peiris, PC for the Petitioner
Madubashini Sri Meththa, SC for the Respondent

Decided on : 25.11.2021

Dhammika Ganepola, J.

The Petitioner seeks to invoke the jurisdiction of this Court by way of a *Writ of Certiorari* to quash the quit notice issued in terms of the Government Quarters (Recovery of Possession) Act No.7 of 1969, marked as P3 to the Petition. Both parties agreed to get the argument disposed by way of written submissions. Anyhow none of the parties have filed the written submissions. There are several connected matters that were taken up together with this matter. The court observes that the facts relating to each are different. While the Petitioner was serving as an employee at the Prima Ceylon Ltd, he had been granted a tenancy in respect of the premises at B-29 in Daanyagama Housing Scheme, China Bay, Trincomalee upon the Lease Agreement P2 entered into between the Petitioner and the Food Commissioner. The Petitioner states that he has complied with all terms and conditions of the said agreement. Later on, the Respondent had taken steps to recover the possession of the said house and accordingly, proceedings had been instituted before the Magistrate's Court of Trincomalee against the Petitioner in order to recover the possession of the house in issue in terms of the Government Quarters (Recovery of Possession) Act. Nevertheless, the said action has been later withdrawn by the Food Commissioner. Thereafter, the Respondent has issued the purported quit notice dated 18.02.2019 (P3) against the Petitioner demanding him to hand over the vacant possession of the said premises alleging that the Petitioner has acted in breach of the Lease Agreement. In spite of such circumstances, the Petitioner has made this application moving to this Court moving for a *Writ of Certiorari* to quash the quit notice marked P3 stating that the purported quit notice is bad in law for the reasons mentioned below.

- i. no valid reason has been given and the reasons stated in the said notice are vague
- ii. the Respondent has procured a violation of the Lease Agreement by refusing to accept the rental payment.

The Petitioner states that he has fully complied with all the terms and conditions of the Lease Agreement and denies the allegation of violation of terms and conditions of the Lease Agreement referred in the quit notice. The Petitioner's stance is that the Respondent has violated the Lease Agreement.

It appears that the Petitioner has come into possession of the premises in issue upon a Lease Agreement marked P2 to the Petition. The said Lease Agreement,

in terms of its closure (iv), becomes inoperative with effluxion of time or petitioner ceased to hold the employment at the Prima Ceylon Ltd. The alleged lease period is from 29.09.2014 to 28.09.2015. There is no evidence of extending the Lease Agreement beyond 28.09.2015. The counsel for the Petitioner conceded the fact that the Petitioner is no longer an employee of Prima Ceylon Ltd. Accordingly, it appears that the Petitioner is basing his case upon an expired Lease Agreement.

Apart from the above findings, in order to decide as to whether the impugned quit notice is bad in law based on the reasons alleged by the Petitioner, this Court will have to inquire into the fact whether the Petitioner or the Respondent has acted in breach of the terms and conditions of the Lease Agreement. Furthermore, the court will have to take into consideration the alleged contractual relationship between parties. However, in the case of **Podinona Urban Council Horana 1981 (1) SLR 141**, it was held that in as much as the relationship between the parties was contractual the Petitioner was not entitled to the remedy by way of *Certiorari*. In the case of **Ariyaratne vs. the National Insurance Corporation and Others (2003 2 SLR 212)** it was held as follows.

“The fact that the authority has failed or refused to fulfil certain terms contained in that contract does not give rise either to public law rights or to any statutory obligations under which court can assume jurisdiction to issue a writ.”

Accordingly, depending on the relationship between parties I am of the view that the Petitioner is not entitled for a remedy under prerogative powers of this Court.

The said Agreement P3 specifies that the subject house and the premises are Government Quarters in terms of Government Quarters (Recovery of Possession) Act. Hence the Petitioner is stopped from denying the same. On the above-premise, the applicability of the Government Quarters (Recovery of Possession) Act in respect of the impugned house and premises cannot be disputed. The Section 7(3) of the Government Quarter's (Recovery of Possession) Act provides the remedies available for such person who claims that they have been unlawfully ejected from Government Quarters. Therefore, if at all the Petitioner claims that he has been unlawfully ejected from Government Quarters, the Petitioner may resort to the alternative remedy available and institute an action for damages or other reliefs in terms of the above section.

In terms of section 4 of the Government Quarter's (Recovery of Possession) Act where a quit notice has been served on the occupier of any Government Quarters neither such occupier nor any dependent of such occupier shall be entitled to occupy such quarters after the expiry of the period of within such occupier is required to such notice to vacate the quarters. Accordingly, such occupier has no option other than delivery the vacant possession of such quarter before the expiry of the period of the relevant authorities or persons.

In view of the reasons mentioned above, I dismiss the application of the Petitioner.

Judge of the Court of Appeal

Sobhitha Rajakaruna, J.

I agree.

Judge of the Court of Appeal