

IN THE COURT OF APPEAL  
ON APPEAL FROM THE HIGH COURT

CRIMINAL APPEAL AAU 37 of 2012  
(High Court HAR 3 of 2012)

BETWEEN : JOSEVA RARASEA  
*Appellant*

AND : THE STATE  
*Respondent*

Coram : Chandra JA  
Temo JA  
Kumararatnam, JA

Counsel : Appellant in person.  
Mr. L. Fotofili for the Respondent.

Date of Hearing : 16 May 2014

Date of Ruling : 27 May 2014

RULING

[1]. When the Appellant's application for leave to appeal against sentence came before a single Judge of the Court on 28 March 2014, the learned Judge was informed by the Appellant that he wanted to withdraw his appeal. The Appellant had conveyed his intention to abandon his appeal by notice in a letter dated 19 March 2014.

[2]. As a result the application was transmitted to the Court of Appeal for its consideration pursuant to Rule 39 of the Court of Appeal Rules (the Rules).

- [3]. Pursuant to the authority given under section 6(2) of the Court of Appeal Act Cap 12 the application was listed before three judges as a duly constituted Court for the hearing of the application.
- [4]. The Appellant was convicted and sentenced by the Magistrates Court on a charge of cultivating illicit drugs to 17 months and 28 days suspended for 2 years. On review the High Court sentenced him to 5 years imprisonment and to serve a minimum period of 3 years.
- [5]. When the application was called before the Court of Appeal the Appellant confirmed that he was applying to withdraw his appeal. The procedure to be followed by the Court in the present application was outlined by the Supreme Court in Jone Masirewa –v- The State (unreported criminal appeal CAV 14 of 2008 delivered 17 August 2010) at paragraph 11:

*“Where written or oral applications are made by an unrepresented petitioner seeking leave to withdraw an appeal, appellate courts should proceed with caution. It would be prudent for instance to ask the (appellant), on the day the matter is listed for hearing, why the (appeal) was to be withdrawn, whether any pressure had been brought to bear on the (appellant) to do so, and whether the decision to abandon had been considered beforehand. This inquiry should be made of the petitioner personally and recorded even in cases where the petitioner is represented. The purpose of the inquiry is to establish that the decision to withdraw has been made deliberately, intentionally and without mistake. Ideally, the decision should be informed also.”*

- [6]. Under Rule 39 the Court of Appeal is empowered to order that an appeal should be deemed dismissed presumably, upon it granting an application by an appellant to abandon or withdraw his appeal. In my view the fact that it is the Court of Appeal that deems the appeal to be dismissed indicates that the procedure is more than a routine administrative task capable of being performed by the Registry. The effect of the words used in Rule 39 when considered with the decision of the Supreme Court in Masirewa –v- The State (supra) is that the application must be placed before the Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal is required to hear the application in accordance with the procedure set out by the Supreme Court. In the event that the


Court of Appeal is satisfied that the Appellant's application is bona fide, voluntary and informed, the Court will grant the application and the appeal will be deemed to have been dismissed by the Court of Appeal.


[7]. The Appellant informed the Court that he wanted to withdraw his appeal because he did not want to challenge the sentence imposed by the court below. He was happy with the sentences imposed. He informed the Court that his decision had been made voluntarily and without pressure or coercion. He indicated that he understood the consequences of his decision.

[8]. As a result the application is granted and the appeal is dismissed.



  
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HON. JUSTICE S. CHANDRA  
JUSTICE OF APPEAL

  
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HON. JUSTICE S. TEMO  
JUSTICE OF APPEAL

  
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HON. JUSTICE P. KUMARARATNAM  
JUSTICE OF APPEAL