



**Obala v Republic (Criminal Application E174 of 2024)  
[2025] KECA 1768 (KLR) (24 October 2025) (Ruling)**

Neutral citation: [2025] KECA 1768 (KLR)

**REPUBLIC OF KENYA  
IN THE COURT OF APPEAL AT KISUMU  
CRIMINAL APPLICATION E174 OF 2024  
HA OMONDI, JA  
OCTOBER 24, 2025**

**BETWEEN**

**JOSEPH AGUTU OBALA ..... APPLICANT**

**AND**

**REPUBLIC ..... RESPONDENT**

*(Being an application seeking leave to appeal against both conviction and sentence of the High Court of Kenya at Kisumu (Cherere, J.) dated 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 in HCCRA No. 116 of 2018)*

**RULING**

1. Joseph Agutu Obala, the applicant herein, was charged with the offence of defilement contrary to section 8(1) as read with section 8(3) of the *Sexual Offences Act* No. 3 of 2006, in Kisumu Criminal Case No.18 of 2016 at the Kisumu Chief Magistrate's Court. Upon trial, he was convicted and sentenced to serve 75 years imprisonment. Aggrieved by the outcome, he lodged an appeal at Kisumu High Court vide HCCRA No. 116 of 2018, which was dismissed in entirety by on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2020 (Cherere, J).
2. Although he was aggrieved by that outcome, he did not file his appeal within the required period; and has now filed this Notice of Motion dated 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024, seeking extension of time so as to file the appeal. He explains that the cause of the delay was due to the fact that he did not have a copy of the judgment which took an inordinately long period to be availed; and he is certain his appeal has great chances of success, as it is arguable.
3. The respondent through the written submissions prepared by learned Counsel Ms. Munyolo Omusebe-Oduor points out that the decision sought to be appealed was delivered on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020; and the application was filed on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024- a period of 4 years and 4 months. He acknowledges that whereas no legitimate notice of appeal has been filed and served within a reasonable time, consider its arguability and notetaking into consideration that the applicant intends to challenge



the High Court's upholding of a conviction and sentence of 75 years imprisonment; then on that ground alone, it is conceded that the appeal is not frivolous. Further, that for a person imprisoned to 75 years, then the delay occasioned by inability to obtain the High Court Judgment in a timely manner cannot be considered as inordinate. The prosecution therefore has no objection to the Court exercising its discretion in the matter to grant the application for extension of time.

4. I have considered the application, the grounds in support thereof, submissions filed and bearing in mind that in an application of this nature, the court is allowed to exercise its discretion. The issue for determination is whether the applicant is deserving of the orders sought. The discretion that I am called to exercise in the determination of this application is unfettered and is provided under rule 4 of the Court of Appeal Rules which provides as follows:

The court may, on such terms as it thinks just, by order extend the time limited by these Rules, or by any decision of the Court or of a superior court, for the doing of any act authorized or required by these Rules, whether before or after the doing of the act, and a reference in these Rules to any such time shall be construed as a reference to that time as extended.

5. Rule 4 of the Court of Appeal Rules does not provide for factors the court ought to consider in an application for extension of time but courts have devised appropriate principles to be applied in achieving a 'just' decision in the circumstances of each case. The case of *Leo Sila Mutiso v Hellen Wangari Mwangi* [1999] 2 EA 231 which is the locus classicus, laid down the parameters as follows:

“It is now well settled that the decision whether or not to extend the time for appealing is essentially discretionary. It is also well settled that in general the matters which this Court takes into account in deciding whether to grant an extension of time are: first the length of the delay, secondly, the reason for the delay; thirdly (possibly) the chances of the appeal succeeding if the application is granted; and, fourthly, the degree of prejudice to the respondent if the application is granted.”

6. In *Muringa Company Ltd v Archdiocese of Nairobi Registered Trustees*, Civil Application No.190 of 2019 observed that:

“Some of the considerations, which are by no means exhaustive, in an application for extension of time include the length of the delay involved, the reason or reasons for the delay, the possible prejudice, if any, that each party stands to suffer, the conduct of the parties, the need to balance the interests of a party who has a decision in his or her favour against the interest of a party who has a constitutionally underpinned right of appeal, the need to protect a party's opportunity to fully agitate its dispute, against the need to ensure timely resolution of disputes; the public interest issues implicated in the appeal or intended appeal; and whether, prima facie, the intended appeal has chances of success or is a mere frivolity.”

7. How long was the delay in this instance? 4 years (four). What was the reason? The applicant is a lay person incarcerated; and did not have the advantage of easily reaching the courts to establish the status of his appeal. He has attached a draft memorandum of appeal to demonstrate that the appeal is not frivolous. There is no maximum or minimum period of delay set out under the law, however, the reason or reasons for the delay must be reasonable and plausible. For instance, in *Andrew Kiplagat Chemarigo v Paul Kipkorir Kibet* [2018] eKLR, this Court stated: “The law does not set out any minimum or maximum period of delay. All it states is that any delay should be satisfactorily explained. A plausible and satisfactory explanation for delay is the key that unlocks the court's flow of discretionary favour. There has to be valid and clear reasons, upon which discretion can be favourably exercisable.”



8. Under Rule 61 (1):

A person who desires to appeal to the Court shall give Notice of appeal in writing, which shall be lodged in six copies with the registrar of the superior Court at the place where the decision against which it is desired to appeal was given, within fourteen days after the date of that decision, and the notice of appeal shall institute the appeal.

9. It goes without saying that the notice of appeal ought to have been lodged within 14 days of the delivery of the decision which it seeks to appeal; that did not happen; nor has the applicant filed and served his record of appeal. I am satisfied that the reasons already alluded to posed a challenge to the applicant to act in a timely manner; and also, as pointed out by the respondent, the sentence the applicant is challenging is a long one which if his prayer is denied will occasion him great prejudice.

10. The upshot is that the application is merited and is allowed.

The applicant is granted extension of time to file and serve the notice of appeal out of time within fourteen (14) days of today's date. The applicant shall file and serve the respondent with the record of appeal within thirty (30) days upon service of the Notice of Appeal.

**DATED AND DELIVERED AT KISUMU THIS 24<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF OCTOBER, 2025.**

**H. A. OMONDI**

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**JUDGE OF APPEAL**

I certify that this is a true copy of the original.

**DEPUTY REGISTRAR.**

