

Dr. Justice Ferdino I. Rebello
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Ms. Patricia Pinto
Ms. Chryselle Dias
Mr. Valmiki Naik

1. Thank you all, for the letter dated 12th February, 2026, seeking my support to oppose, bringing into the River Mandovi, a vessel 112 meter long and 27 meter high, and having capacity to accommodate 2000 persons. This vessel, as I understand, is to replace a vessel of the same Company having capacity of 300 persons under the same licence. This one Casino if allowed, would have more persons on board, then all the existing six Casinos.
2. The opposition by the people of Panaji and surrounding areas, is, Moral, Just and to protect the Environment which is the fundamental duty of every citizen and to protect all our children, from the adverse effects of gambling which the government itself recognises as a "SIN Industry". No person has a fundamental right to carry trade or commerce in "gambling". In law, it is described as a trade which is "res extra commercium" and is purely at the discretion of the government, which discretion can be withdrawn, any time.
3. Successive Governments have unfortunately, turned our Capital Panaji into a "Casino Capital of India" which has affected everyone living along the banks of

the River Mandovi and beyond. The mooring of six vessels in the River Mandovi has affected its ecology and environment.

4. Under the provisions of the Indian Ports Act, 2025 every port has to have port based reception and handling plans for port waste. I understand that till date no such plans have been finalized. Under the provisions of the Inland Vessels Act, 2021, every vessel including existing vessels entering a port has to discharge its garbage at shore reception facilities and have to meet the standards set out in the Inland Vessels (Prevention, Containment of Pollution) Rules 2022. The government and the MLAs of Panaji and other constituencies on the banks of the Mandovi must inform the people as to whether these vessels are compliant, and whether the government has appointed a Conservator under the Indian Ports Act, 2025.
5. The problem started in 1992 when for the first time, the Government introduced Section 13A of the Goa Public Gambling Act, by which Section the government may authorize any game of electronic amusement / slot machines in Five Star Hotels. This position continues till date. In other words, in Five Star Hotels, what can only be done is any game of electronic amusement and slot machines.
6. Governments have come to power promising the people to remove the casinos from the river Mandovi. Not only did the governments of the day renege on their promise, but legalized their continuance in the river Mandovi. In 1996, the government of that day amended Section 13A and for the first time permitted

“and such table games and gaming on board in vessels offshore as may be notified. The government must produce the Notification as to which table games and gaming they have allowed as “gaming” is not there in Section 13-B.. Successive MLAs of Panaji and surrounding areas are parties to bring about this amendment.

7. Inland Vessel, under the Inland Vessels Act, 2021, has to be a vessel used for transportation, storing or accommodation, within or through inland waters and plying in Inland Waters. The casino vessels which are moored in the Mandovi, are neither used for transportation, storage or accommodation within or through inland waters nor do they ply in the inland Waters. The government must explain to the people as to how the Casino vessels fall within this description.

8. Under Section 13A of the Goa Public Gambling Act, table games and gaming are allowed on board in vessels “Offshore”. This is repeated in para 2 of Notification dated 9th November, 1995, notified on 23.11.1995, in the Goa Gazette. This definition has not been defined in the Act.. One must understand in its ordinary dictionary meaning, means away from the shore typically in the sea. In other words there must be a shore. There is no shore where the vessels are moored. The area where the vessels are moored is a running river and cannot be described as “offshore” as there is no shore thereto. . In 2020, Section 13-B was introduced that gam/games but not “gaming” in areas, designated. In 2020, the Government issued notification, designating Five Star Hotel and Vessel. No area has been designated for a vessel, it must therefore

be offshore – and not in Mandovi. The government must explain to the people as to how the casino boats are allowed to be moored in the river and whether the moorings are moorings installed by the government or the Captain of Ports. No Rules have been made till date.

9. The Goa Gaming Act prohibits transfer of licence and at the same time subject to conditions and restrictions permit transfer of a licence in the name of one person to other person. There is no provision as I see it for replacing vessel with larger vessel under the Inland Ports Act. Even if a vessel can be replaced, (the legal position I am not aware) it must be in terms of the same conditions of license of the vessel which is sought to be replaced and must now meet the antipollution measures, both under the Inland Vessels Act and the Indian Ports Act. The Government, therefore, must immediately, disclose the original licence given to the person presently running the vessel. If the government does not do so, the MLA of Panaji who is a Minister in the government must disclose it to the people.

10. Responsible governance is by a government whether at a State level or a Local body like a municipal corporation. They owe it to the people to protect their right to life. The government at a State level and the municipal corporation at a local level, and the MLAs who represent the constituencies on the banks of the river Mandovi have equally failed the citizens.

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11. Gaming has its bad sides resulting in moral degradation with several vices. It is high time that our religious leaders across all religions raise their voice against this, SIN INDUSTRY.

12. On behalf of the "Enough is Enough" movement as removal of casinos from the Mandovi is one of the points in the charter, the movement extends its support to the "PONNJEKARS AGAINST CASINOS". I also propose soon to write on the legal aspects to the government.



DR. JUSTICE FERDINO I. REBELLO
CONVENOR "ENOUGH IS ENOUGH"