

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF FIJI**

**AT LABASA**

**[APPELLATE JURISDICTION]**

**CRIMINAL APPEAL NO. HAA 41 OF 2023**

**MAGISTRATES' COURT NO. 121 OF 2020**

**BETWEEN** : **SAKIUSA QARANIQIO**

**AND** : **MINISTRY OF FISHERIES**

**Counsel** : Mr S Kumar for the Appellant  
Mr E Kotoilakeba for the Respondent

**Date of Judgment** : **4 April 2025**

## **JUDGMENT**

[1] This appeal concerns a jurisdictional error.

[2] The appellant was tried, convicted and sentenced for the offence of failure to comply with seasonal species restrictions pursuant to Offshore Fisheries Management Regulations 2014 in the Magistrates' Court at Labasa.

[3] In *Douyou Foods Imports & Export Ltd v Ministry of Fisheries*, Criminal Appeal No HAA21/23 (21 March 2025), this Court held that the Magistrates' Court does not have jurisdiction to convict and sentence for offences under the Offshore Fisheries

Management Act. The jurisdiction to convict and sentence for offences under the Offshore Fisheries Management Act lies with the High Court pursuant to section 98 of that Act.

[4] It therefore follows that the conviction and sentence imposed in this cases by the Magistrates' Court must be set aside for want of jurisdiction.

[5] **Result**

- Extension of time is granted to appeal.
- Appeal allowed.
- Conviction and penalty orders that were imposed in the Magistrates' Court are set aside.
- Fine if paid are to be refunded to the appellant after the expiry of the 30-day appeal period to the Court of Appeal.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "D. Goundar", written over a horizontal line.

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**Hon. Mr Justice Daniel Goundar**

**Solicitors:**

Sen Lawyers for the Appellant

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for the Respondent