

News

Surendra Gadling's bail is once again postponed by the Supreme Court; this is the 17th adjournment in two years.



In relation to the 2016 Surajgarh arson case, the human rights attorney has been detained for more than six years without any charges being brought against him.

For the seventeenth time since it was initially filed in August 2023, the Supreme Court postponed the bail request of human rights attorney and **Surajgarh** arson suspect Surendra Gadling on Wednesday [**Surendra Pundalik Gadling vs State of Maharashtra**].

After Additional Solicitor General SV Raju requested time, claiming he was "not ready," the case was postponed and is currently before a bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and K Vinod Chandran. The hearing is now scheduled for September 17.

Since June 2018, **Gadling**, a lawyer from Nagpur, has been detained in relation to the Bhima Koregaon case. The current bail request stems from a different arson case in **Gadchiroli**, Maharashtra, when multiple iron ore-carrying cars were burned in 2016.

Members of the outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist) were accused by the police of carrying out the attack. Authorities worried that Gadling would be released on default bail, so they arrested him in January 2019 when he was already incarcerated.

In February 2023, the Bombay High Court denied his request for release. In August of the same year, Gadling then went to the Supreme Court. Since then, there has been a steady sequence of adjournments for his appeal that has lasted over two years. Gadling is the only one still in detention out of the seven accused in the 2016 case; the other six have already been released on bail.

The State of Maharashtra received notice from a bench headed by Justice Aniruddha Bose on October 10, 2023, marking the start of the first hearing. The State did not submit a response by the deadline of November 29, 2023. Both in January 2024 and in February, when the matter was postponed until March 6, the deadline was extended. Justice Bose retired shortly after the case was not heard that day.

The case was considered by benches headed by Justice MM Sundresh starting in July 2024. The court postponed the case until August after the State requested further time on July 24 to submit its counter-affidavit. Additional extensions for the State to submit its reply were granted on August 21 and September 30.

The court gave the State what it called a "**last chance**" to submit its reply on December 4, 2024, but the affidavit wasn't received until January 2025.

Adjournments persisted even after the reply was submitted. Once more, the State requested time on January 30, 2025. The bench scheduled the case for March 27 and requested more documentation from Gadling's attorneys on February 6.

The case was postponed by two weeks after the State asked for more time on March 27 to put additional papers on file. The bail appeal was not reopened until July 18, when the bench postponed it until November 2025.

Gadling's attorney submitted a motion for an early hearing in the interim. After over a year, Justice Sundresh resigned from the case on August 26, 2025.

On September 3, the case was brought before Justices JK Maheshwari and K Vinod Chandran before being postponed once more at the State's request.

Even though his co-accused has obtained relief, Gadling's bail has been pending for more than two years due to the numerous postponements. The Supreme Court will now hear the matter on September 17.

Gadling's bail request has been stalled in what can only be characterized as a maze of judicial inaction due to the protracted chain of deferments. He has already served more than six years in prison, although charges in the Surajgarh case have not yet been brought. The impression that the State is committed to extending his confinement and that the Court has permitted the procedure to become the punishment by remaining silent is only strengthened by each adjournment.