

Only 15 Convictions in 10 Years : ED's 5,892 PMLA cases yield just 0.25% success rate

Members of Parliament (MPs) have a constitutional right to ask questions during Question Hour. This power is granted in **Article 75** of the Indian Constitution (which makes the Council of ministers collectively responsible to Parliament) and **Article 118** (which empowers each house to make its own rules of procedure). In practice, the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha rules of procedure establish the mechanics of Question Hour. These rules distinguish **starred** versus **unstarred questions**. An unstarred Question is one not called for oral answer on the floor; its answer is provided in writing and simply laid on Table of the house.

On **29th July 2025**, in Rajya Sabha, TMC MP Saket Gokhale raised an **Unstarred question (No. 1027)** addressed to the Ministry of Finance. He asked for data on Enforcement Directorate (ED) investigations under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) from January 2015 to June 2025. The question was phrased was:

Will the Minister of **Finance** be pleased to state :-

- (a) the details of all cases filed by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) between the period January, 2015 till date where chargesheets have not yet been filed in courts and trial of the accused has not started; and
- (b) the details of all cases filed by the ED between the period January, 2015 till date that have either been withdrawn or where prosecution/proceedings have been closed by the agency?

In other words, the MP asked for **(a)** All ED cases since 2015 still at investigation/pending-charges stage, and **(b)** All ED cases since 2015 that were subsequently withdrawn or closed.

Answer by the Ministry of Finance

In a written reply, the Ministry of State for Finance (Shri Pankaj Chaudhary) provided the request figures. The Ministry's Answer was :

(a) During the period from 01.01.2015 to 30.06.2025, the Directorate of Enforcement has taken up 5892 cases for investigation under the provisions of the Prevention of Money-laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA). In these cases, 1398 Prosecution Complaints (PCs) including 353 Supplementary PCs have been filed before the respective Special Courts under PMLA, 2002. Out of which, so far, the Special Courts have framed charges in 300 Prosecution Complaints including 66 Supplementary PCs. As on 30.06.2025, the PMLA Special Courts have convicted 15 persons in 08 conviction orders in these cases.

(b) Out of the cases recorded during the period from 01.01.2015 to 30.06.2025, the Directorate of Enforcement has filed closure report in 49 cases before the Hon'ble Special Court, PMLA.

In brief:

The Finance Ministry reported that during January 2015 – June 2025 the Enforcement Directorate investigated **5,892** PMLA cases. Of these, it issued **1,398** prosecution complaints (including 353 supplementary complaints) in special PMLA courts. So far charges have been framed in only 300 cases. The courts have convicted just **15 individuals** (in 8 cases) from that period. Meanwhile, ED has filed **49** closure reports (i.e. cases withdrawn) in Special Courts during the same period.

From these figures we can summarize the outcome of ED's decade long PMLA drive :

- **Total ED investigations (2015-mid. 2025) : 5,892**
- **Prosecution complaints filed : 1,398 (including 353 supplementary complaints)**
- **Charges framed : 300**
- **Convicted persons : 15 (in 8 cases)**
- **Closure reports (cases closed / withdrawn): 49**
- **Conviction rate : Approximately 0.25% of cases (15 convictions out of 5,892 cases)**

The Enforcement Directorate is India's primary financial crime investigation agency under the Ministry of Finance. The numbers mentioned above underscores a very low yield of convictions. Out of every 100 ED investigations, roughly 24 led to prosecution, only 5 reached charges being framed, and only 0.25 resulted in a conviction. In absolute terms, 15 convictions in a decade is a tiny fraction of the cases initiated.

The Finance Ministry's reply itself notes that these results "offer glimpse into the **lengthy and complex process of prosecution** under financial crime laws". In practice, prosecuting PMLA cases involves extensive investigations (often by multiple agencies), assembling detailed financial evidence, special court trials, and multiple layers of appeal. This legal complexity explains why many cases remain pending for years. For example, even framing charges took place in only 300 cases out of 5,892 (about 5%) over 10 years.

In summary, the parliamentary question and answer reveal that although the ED files many money laundering cases, only a small fraction progress to conviction. The conviction rate is extremely low, reflecting the slow, procedural nature of financial crime trials. The data and the Ministry's own comments emphasize that under the current system, securing legal outcomes in PMLA cases is time-consuming and complicated, often taking many years to reach even preliminary conclusions.