

**THE FEDERAL TAX OMBUDSMAN
ISLAMABAD**

COMPLAINT NO.15832/LHR/CUST/2026

Dated: 31.08.2026 * RO Lahore

Mr. Umer Altaf,
House No.664, Al-Noor Manzil,
Shahbagh, Lahore

... Complainant

Versus

The Secretary,
Revenue Division,
Islamabad

... Respondent

Dealing Officer	:	Ms. Adila Rehman, Advisor
Authorized Representative	:	Mr. Altaf Hussain, AR
Departmental Representative	:	Ms. Sara Batool, D.C Customs
Date of Hearing(s)	:	25.09.2026, 12.10 .2026

FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS

This Complaint was filed against the Collector, Collectorate of Customs, Appraisement South Asia Pakistan Terminal (SAPT)/West, Karachi, in terms of Section 10(1) of the Federal Tax Ombudsman Ordinance, 2000, regarding difficulties in grant of approval for customs self-clearance.

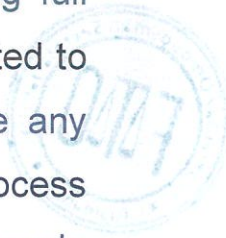
2. Briefly, facts of the case as narrated by the Complainant are that, previously, the Complainant's father had filed a Complaint No.02481/LHR/CUST/2026 on the same issue wherein it was mentioned that the applicant was engaged in regular business of import and export. Since commencing import activities, almost all consignments of the applicant were cleared under the self-clearance procedure. Upon scrutiny of the relevant record, no discrepancy or irregularity was observed in respect of the said goods. Further, filing of the Goods Declaration (GD) was a mandatory requirement prior to obtaining "ALLOW" from the system. Clearance of goods was processed strictly in accordance with the applicable laws and



prescribed procedures. In that case, although the consignment arrived at Karachi and was unloaded at the port on 31.01.2025, the importer neither filed the GD for clearance nor obtained "ALLOW" from the system; instead, an application was submitted. The concerned Assistant Collector of Customs, Mr. Anas Tariq, had neither rejected nor approved the request. In compliance with his directions, the applicant submitted an undertaking for self-clearance. Nevertheless, despite the lapse of an extraordinary period of time, the applicant had neither been granted "ALLOW" to file the Goods Declaration (GD) nor had the application been formally rejected. As a result of this inaction and unusual delay, the applicant was facing demurrage and severe hardship. The applicant apprehended that due to the prolonged delay, the case would fall within the ambit of Section 82 of the Customs Act, thereby exposing the applicant to the imposition of heavy penalties for filing the GD belatedly. Further, measures should be taken to prevent any attempt to violate the rights of the complainant, ensuring full protection of their legal entitlements. The FBR should be directed to actively promote the self-clearance system, hold accountable any individuals obstructing its proper functioning, and make the process fully transparent. The self-clearance facility should not be made dependent on any approvals/permissions, so that all importers are aware of their rights and can exercise them freely. After going into the merits of the case, the FTO had issued the following recommendations on 09.03.2026:

In view of the above, FBR to direct:

- (i) the Collector Collectorate of Customs Appraisement HQRs Customs House, Karachi to pass a clear and speaking order on the complainant's request for self-clearance within a specified timeframe, strictly in accordance with law; and



- (ii) ensure that, where the complainant fulfils all codal formalities, facilitation is extended without unnecessary delay in order to avoid further accrual of demurrage; and
- (iii) Report compliance within 30 days.

In response to the above-mentioned recommendations, the Collectorate of Customs Appraisement (Hqrs), Customs House, Karachi, vide letter dated 06.04.2026, has submitted compliance report, enclosing the report of Assistant Collector, Collectorate of Custom Appraisement (West) Customs House, Karachi's letter dated 06.04.2026 wherein it was stated that the Licensing Authority hereby ordered that:

- (i) The request of the applicant shall be processed and finalized strictly in accordance with law and applicable SROs.
- (ii) The concerned dealing staff shall ensure that all codal formalities, scrutiny, and verification are completed prior to decision.
- (iii) Upon completion of the process:
 - If the applicant fulfils all prescribed conditions, the self-clearance facility shall be granted within two days;
 - In case of any deficiency or non-compliance, the request shall be rejected through a reasoned order, clearly specifying the grounds.

In the Instant Complaint, the Complainant submitted that he once again requested the Collectorate on 25.08.2026 regarding approval of self-clearance but the request was refused by the Department without any legal ground and without explaining any reason for the rejection of the request. Due to this negative policy of the Department and violation of FTO's earlier recommendations dated 09.03.2026, the Complainant was suffering and his business was stuck up on the grounds that two of his 2-GDs were in the pipeline for approval of self-clearance. The Complainant prayed that the Department be directed to grant approval of self-clearance to enable him to file his GDs.





3. The Complaint was referred to Secretary Revenue Division for comments, in terms of Section 10(4) of the FTO Ordinance, read with Section 9(1) of the Federal Ombudsmen Institutional Reforms Act, 2013. In response, the Collector, Collectorate of Customs, Appraisalment-SAPT, Karachi, through letter dated 17.09.2026, submitted parawise comments, stating therein that the complaint did not pertain to the jurisdiction of this Collectorate. The subject consignments were subjected to Inter-Port Movement from SAPT to Al-Hamd International Container Terminal, which fell under the jurisdiction of the Collectorate of Customs Appraisalment-West. Accordingly, matters relating to filing of Goods Declarations, clearance formalities and other subsequent proceedings at the destination terminal fell within the jurisdiction of the concerned Collectorate. It was further submitted that the Complainant's request for filing of Self-GD was examined in light of the applicable rules and departmental instructions. The subject consignments comprised multiple items, including capacitor parts and other items, and therefore fell within the scope of Public Notice No.04 of 2018 dated 19.12.2018, issued by the Office of the Chief Collector of Customs vide No.SI/MISC13/2014-CC(Appr)481, which provided that commercial importers of multiple consumer product consignments imported against a single index, comprising a mix of three or more items specified in Table-I thereof, were required to file Goods Declaration for clearance through a Customs Agent licensed under Section 207 of the Customs Act, 1969 and the rules made thereunder. The subject consignments contained different items, including capacitor parts and other items, and accordingly the request for Self-GD filing was not allowed in accordance with the aforesaid Public Notice. The action was, therefore, taken in accordance with the applicable departmental instructions. The Complainant's request for abolition of the existing

requirement and allowing all importers to file Self-GD directly was a matter of policy and fell beyond the scope of this Collectorate. The SAPT Collectorate was required to implement the applicable Customs laws, rules and departmental instructions and had no authority to independently modify or dispense with such requirements. The Department prayed for rejection of the Complaint as it related to the jurisdiction of the Collectorate of Customs Appraisement-West.

4. The Collector, Collectorate of Customs Appraisement-West, Customs House, Karachi, through letter dated 12.10.2026, submitted parawise comments, stating therein that the subject complaint, insofar as it related to the grant of permission for filing of Self-GD, did not pertain to the jurisdiction of the Collectorate of Customs Appraisement-West. The subject consignments were imported under an IGM pertaining to SAPT. Therefore, the request for permission to file Self-GD was required to be examined and decided by the Collectorate having jurisdiction over SAPT, being the Collectorate where the subject IGM was filed. The subsequent movement of the consignments from SAPT to Al-Hamd International Container Terminal through Inter-Port Movement did not, by itself, transfer the jurisdiction for deciding the request for Self-GD from the IGM Collectorate to the destination Collectorate. It was further submitted that the issue of whether the Complainant was entitled to file Self-GD was required to be determined by the competent Collectorate having jurisdiction over the subject IGM, i.e. SAPT Collectorate. Accordingly, any decision to allow or refuse such permission was within the domain of SAPT Collectorate and not Collectorate of Customs Appraisement-West. Moreover, it was submitted that no request for grant of Self-Clearance permission on BL (Bill of Lading) basis had so far been received from the Complainant in the Collectorate of Customs Appraisement-West,





as per the available record. In this regard, the instructions issued by the Chief Collector of Customs vide Public Notice No. 04 of 2018 dated 19.12.2018 were also relevant. The said Public Notice provides the procedure for commercial importers importing consignments comprising multiple consumer products. Where the prescribed conditions for Self-GD were not fulfilled, the Goods Declaration was required to be filed through a duly licensed Customs Agent. Therefore, where the subject consignment comprised multiple/different items, including capacitor parts and other items, the request for Self-GD was required to be considered by the competent authority having jurisdiction over the subject IGM, strictly in accordance with the aforesaid Public Notice and applicable Customs Rules/instructions. It is clarified that the subsequent Inter-Port Movement of the subject consignments from SAPT to Al-Hamd International Container Terminal did not make Collectorate of Customs Appraisement-West the competent authority for granting Self-GD permission. The IGM jurisdiction remained the relevant jurisdiction for determining the authority competent to deal with the Self-GD request. Accordingly, Collectorate of Customs Appraisement-West had neither granted nor refused any Self-GD permission in respect of the subject consignments. The Collectorate prayed for rejection of the Complaint as it related to Collectorate of Customs Appraisement-SAPT.

5. Both the AR and DR attended the hearing on 12.10.2026 and reiterated what had been mentioned in the written complaint and parawise comments.

6. Arguments of both sides heard and available record perused.

FINDINGS:

7. It is observed that both the Collectorates i.e. Appraisement-



SAPT and Appraisement West are claiming that the jurisdiction in the instant case lies with the other Collectorate. It is further observed that both Collectorates have informed that the subject consignments comprised multiple items, including capacitor parts and other items, and therefore fell within the scope of Public Notice No.04 of 2018 dated 19.12.2018, issued by the Office of the Chief Collector of Customs vide No.SI/MISC13/2014-CC(Appr)481, which provides that commercial importers of multiple consumer product consignments imported against a single index, comprising a mix of three or more items specified in Table-I thereof, were required to file Goods Declaration for clearance through a Customs Agent licensed under Section 207 of the Customs Act, 1969 and the rules made thereunder.

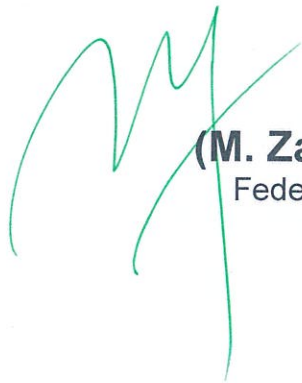
8. It is pertinent to mention here that in the earlier Complaint No.02481/LHR/CUST/2026, filed on the same issue, the Collectorate of Customs Appraisement (Hqrs), Customs House, Karachi, had issued guidelines vide Order dated 06.04.2026 for disposal of such request of self-clearance within two days after following the prescribed procedures and law but the record shows that the such guidelines have not been followed by both the Collectorates and the matter was referred to each other due to which the Complainant is suffering and has to pay heavy detention and demurrages. Both the Collectorate are required to follow the guidelines as earlier issued by the Collectorate of Customs Appraisement (Hqrs), Karachi vide Order dated 06.04.2026 in letter and spirit and facilitate the importers/exporters in accordance with law and rules. The Collectorate, having jurisdiction over the Complainant's case, is also required to reconsider his request regarding self-clearance and in case of rejection, issue an order specifying the reasons as per guidelines issued by the concerned Collectorate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. FBR to:-

- (i) direct Chief Collector, Collectorate of Customs, Appraisement (South), Custom House, Karachi to issue Collectorate specific instructions to the concerned Collectorate (having jurisdiction over the Complainant's case) to reconsider the Complainant's request regarding self-clearance in respect of Goods Declarations in the light of the instructions issued earlier vide Order dated 06.04.2026, on merit in accordance with law; and
- (ii) report compliance within 15 days.

Dated: 21 OCT 2026



(M. Zafar ul Haq Hijazi)
Federal Tax Ombudsman