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# Indian court orders bus firm to rehire driver with HIV

**MUMBAI:** An Indian court has ordered a public transport authority to rehire a sacked HIV-positive bus driver in a "landmark" case for those stigmatised for having the virus, the man's lawyer said.

The 43-year-old, whose name has been withheld, was working in the western city of Pune when he became HIV positive in 2008, leading him to require a less heavy-duty job than driving, his advocate Asim Sarode said.

The man approached his employers at the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation explaining his condition and requesting a different position at the company.

"They said it was not possible, that he was taken into employment as a driver and there was no provision to change his job profile. From that point, they started harassing him," Sarode said.

He said the harassment led to the man's eventual dismissal last year.

Sarode heard about the case through the media and offered to give pro bono legal assistance.

He said the state transport minister had pledged on television to get the worker reinstated in a "lighter job", but he was removed again after 13 days.

The man took the case to the Bombay High Court, arguing that

"capacity to work is more important than HIV status. This is definitely against human rights", his lawyer said.

On Wednesday, the court said the man must be reinstated within seven days and another hearing will be held to decide on the victim's compensation.

The bus driver himself told reporters on Thursday that his wife and two sons had struggled to make ends meet after he was sacked.

"I am happy that I can get my job back now. I wish others don't have to go through the trauma that I did to get my basic rights," he was quoted as saying by *The Hindu* newspaper. — AFP