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HC tells Juhu cops to protect couple from daughter-in-law

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Mumbai: The Bombay high court has directed the senior inspector of Juhu police station to provide protection to an elderly couple, aged 80 and 77, who claimed they had become targets of a dispute between their son and daughter-in-law. Justice Shahrukh Kathawalla ordered police protection after the couple expressed apprehension that they faced danger to their lives from their daughter-in-law. The court is hearing the couple's application alleging harassment and seeking court directions to their son and daughter-in-law to leave their Juhu bungalow. The court was shown CCTV footage of the daughter-in-law pouring various liquids on the floor, furniture and stairs.

"If husband and wife cannot get along, and if they are having constant fights, they have no right to stay in the house and make the lives of the parents a living hell under the garb/pretext that it is the matrimonial home of the daughter-in-law. This is certainly not their age to constantly attend police sta-

HOW PARENTS CAN SEEK RELIEF

Legal reprieve for elderly parents

- Parents can file a declaratory suit under Specific Relief Act seeking removal of persons from their house
- Parents can also seek relief under a special law for senior citizens



What The Law Says

■ Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, makes it a legal obligation of children to provide for their parents who are senior citizens. It provides a mechanism for protection of life and property of senior citizens, abandoning whom is a criminal offence

PUNISHMENT Jail term of up to three months



tions and courts," said Justice Kathawalla.

Advocate Vivek Kantawalla, counsel for the senior citizens, said though the house was owned by the couple, "they were not allowed to stay peacefully during the twilight days of their lives". The advocate said the elderly couple feared danger to their lives and limbs at the hands of their daughter-in-law, who had filed several false and frivolous cases against them this year. This was after the son and daughter-in-law had lived in the home without incident for 23 years, but they had had a fall-out, which resulted in the parents being dragged

into criminal cases, said the advocate.

The daughter-in-law last week gave an undertaking that she will ensure she does not give cause for complaint to her in-laws. The elderly couple, however, said they did not trust her assurances and claimed that though they filed several complaints at Juhu police station, no action had been taken. The son said he does not interfere when his wife misbehaves with his parents as the complaints she has lodged against him include domestic violence and dowry harassment.

The next hearing will be held on October 19.