



PRESS RELEASE

People's Watch condemns the Chennai city police for the death of Mukesh from Kannagi Nagar.

Mukesh (19), Vasanth (20), Vikki and Mohan (22) from Kannagi Nagar had gone to Pudupettai to attend a family function on the 12th of October. Early the next morning the trio went near the Coovum river side to relieve themselves. That time police officials from the Egmore police station who spotted the trio and started questioning them. When Mukesh replied that they were all from Kannagi Nagar, the police started beating the trio immediately. The three men started running away from the abusive police. The police chased them and one official threw a stone at Mukesh, which resulted in a severe head injury. The police also threw a stone at Vikki and Mohan. Vasanth was later arrested by the officials.

What preceded this attack on Mukesh and his friends was that on the 10th of March a team of 8 police officials in civil clothing went to Mukesh's house at about 11pm and forced him to accompany them to a dark place near a metro train bridge and beat him brutally.

The police released him later saying that they had mistaken for another individual. The police then dropped Mukesh back to his house in Kannagi Nagar without treating him for his physical pain and injuries.

To condemn this unlawful action of the police, Sumathi (31) Mukesh's mother gave a written complaint to the police commissioner of Chennai on the 12th of March. Based on the complaint the head constable of the Crime Branch, Mr. Saravanan (36), Mr.Senthil (25) from the Home Guard police, and friends of a one Mr.Dhanapal (25) were suspended by the commissioner of police.

It is with a heavy heart that People's Watch announces that Mukesh's body was found near the Coovum river side by his parents. Mukesh's parents suspect that police officials chased Mukesh, beat him and pushed him into the river.

Chennai city police function under a DGP rank senior police officer; in the recent past a rather worrying trend of custodial deaths have been recorded. On the 22nd of September one Mr.Karthik died at the Kannagi Nagar police station. Just yesterday a man named Srikanth Balaji was lodged in the central prison died at the Royapettah Government Hospital as a result of police and prison torture.

It is very clear that the Chennai police department is not functioning as per section 41 of the Criminal Code of Procedure Act and is also not following the guidelines of the Supreme Court framed in the case of Arnesh Kumar in 2014. There are many cases of unlawful arrest, custodial torture and deaths in Tamil Nadu. We, at People's Watch, understand that the police officers at the top levels are inventing ways to protect subordinates within the department.

People's Watch strongly condemns these unlawful arrests, custodial deaths and torture that is taking place in Tamil Nadu. Moreover, People's Watch demands legal action and the registration of criminal cases against the police officials who are allegedly responsible for Mukesh's death under sections 176(1)(A) of the Criminal Code of Procedure. These cases must be investigated by a Judicial Magistrate and the policemen responsible for these illegal and deviant behaviour must be suspended during the period of investigation. People's Watch also demands that the National Human Right Commission should take these cases as suo motto. People's Watch urges the Tamil Nadu Government to give a minimum of 20 lakhs rupees to Mukesh's family immediately as compensation.

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