



People's Watch

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A Network Towards Human Rights Monitoring, Intervention, Campaign, Research and Documentation
(A Programme Unit of the Centre for Promotion of Social Concerns)

Press Release

13.10.2016

People's Watch condemns unlawful arrests of peaceful protesters in Karur, Tamil Nadu. People's Watch also demands disciplinary action against the Karur district collector and police officials responsible for the same.

In order to prevent illegal sand-mining in the Nanjai Kadambankurichi, Thavuttupalayam and Thottakurichi river beds a group of political leaders, environmental and human rights activists along with members of the local farmers' association staged a peaceful protest on the 12th of October. Children of the local farmers were also present at the protest. Police illegally arrested protesters without any formal notice or warning. People's Watch condemns these unlawful arrests of people and demands disciplinary action against the Karur collector and police officials.

On 12.10.2016, at 10.15 am, there was a peaceful protest held in the presence of Indian Communist Party senior leader Mr.Nallakkannu at Thalavaypuram in Karur District where other political party leaders and cadres, environment activists, farmers and their children were also present. Just moments after the protesters started walking with white flags towards potential spots of illegal mining to prevent the sand-mining mafia from smuggling sand, police official intercepted and forcefully arrested the protesters near Velayupalayam. The police then took the protesters into illegal custody and lodged them in a government building called 'Gandhi Mandram'.

People's Watch has conducted a fact finding mission into the alleged sand-mining in the area. The monitoring head of the organisation, Mr.Mohan, even participated in the peaceful protest.

Mr.Muhilan, a Coordinator of Tamil Nadu Suttru Soozhal Paathukappu Iyakkam has presented a written complaint before the district collector of Karur about this illegal sand-mining along with video evidence on the 10th of October. There has been no proper response regarding the written complaint yet. In the wake of inaction by district administration, people have decided to hold peaceful protests to exercise their basic rights and protect their rivers and natural resources. What is surprising is that even the police officials had initially granted permission for this peaceful protest.

People's Watch could like to highlight that the district collector of Karur has not contributed to preventing illegal sand-mining with the help of revenue department and the police, instead the administration is working towards silencing dissent by arresting peaceful protesters.

People's Watch demands immediate legal actions against both the district collector and revenue officials for their illegitimate role in supporting the sand-mining mafia in Karur. People's Watch also strongly condemns the illegal arrest of protesters and the general public who peacefully voiced their grave concerns on illegal sand-mining. People's Watch demands disciplinary action against police officials for arresting protesters and detaining them.