

People's Watch poses 7 questions on violations in IPS Balveer Singh torture investigation; expresses shock with statement of Tamil Nadu IPS Officers' Association president

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MADURAI: Human rights activist and executive director of People's Watch Mr. Henri Tiphagne has strongly objected to the statement of the Tamil Nadu IPS officers' Association president Mr. Abhash Kumar which said that "there is a media trial going in allegations of custodial violence against suspended IPS officer Balveer Singh and that various vested interests are working in social media to influence evidence, witnesses, investigating agencies and general public" in the recent allegations of custodial torture in Ambasamudram police limits.

In a press statement issued from Madurai on April 5th 2023, Mr. Henri Tiphagne has posed seven questions to the Tamil Nadu IPS Officers' Association president on behalf of the People's Watch raising concerns on the whole investigation being done now.

The questions are:

1. Firstly, as far as the Collector and SP are concerned, why was there no immediate inquiry by the District Police Complaints Authority in which both of them are members? Why?
- 2) The PSO enquiry now undertaken does not relate to Crime No. 49 of 2023 of Ambasamudram police station or Crime No. 63 of 2023 of V.K. Puram PS but relates to FIR in Crime No. 69 of 2023 of Kallidaikurichi PS.
- 3) Why was the power under the District Police Complaints Authority not used by the District Collector and SP and only a PSO enquiry under Crime No. 69 of 2023 of Kallidaikurichi police station resorted to. Was it to avoid the registration of an FIR in a case against an IPS officer? The statement of the TNIPSA almost substantiates this.
- 4) Has the IPS Officers' Association verified Tamil Nadu Government's G.O. No 45 dated 09.02.2021 following the judgement in the case of Paramvir Singh Saini vs Baljit Singh & Others [Special Leave Petition (Criminal) No. 3543 of 2020 dated December 2, 2020] on whether all directions about CCTV and its locations and formation of the

State Level Oversight Committee [SLOC] and District Level Oversight Committee [DLOC] has been followed or not. Before issuing such a statement, please verify whether the Ambasamudram police station has followed all directions of the said CCTV judgement.

5) Have you verified the existence of the CCTV footage of Kallidaikurichi, Ambasamudram and Vikramasingapuram police stations where this grave torture has taken place leading to full room being blood stained which were later to be forcibly wiped by the victims themselves?

6) Why have you not verified the reasons behind keeping two juveniles (names withheld) in the police station under the custody of policemen in uniform; later tortured, handcuffed and transported in private vehicles at the cost of their family members [just as it happened in the Sathankulam case] which is totally contrary to the mandates under Juvenile Justice Act, 2015. Is this the reputation of your TNIPSA?

7) Does the TNIPSA not know that the victims, in this case, belong to various communities including SC/ST and some of them were selectively abused by the officials using their caste? The list is extremely long and will become longer if an FIR into the incident of torture at three different locations – Kallidaikurichi, Ambasamudram and Vikramasingapuram police stations – as well as at the Central Prison, Palayamkottai is not registered against Balveer Singh along with other officers and police personnel responsible for directly engaging in acts of torture and doing away with the evidence, threatening the victims not to depose in front of the doctor and the Judicial Magistrate and all this kept secret from 10 to 24 March 2023.

THANKS TO MEDIA AND PUBLIC PRESSURE:

Raising these questions on investigation process, the People's Watch executive director has said that there are very straightforward and honest IPS officers in the State who will not agree with this statement released by TNIPSA president when the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly is in session. "Media expose and public pressure alone have led to the few follow-ups that we are witnessing today – whether it is the suspension of Balveer Singh IPS and putting him on a compulsory waitlist; placing SP Saravanan again on compulsory wait; SP CIDs and SB CID being transferred etc.. Why was your TNIPSA silent when a woman IPS officer was sexually harassed by a male IPS officer of a very high rank?"

'WE HAIL HONEST POLICE OFFICERS':

Mr.Henri Tiphagne has said in the press statement that People's Watch has always been the forefront to hail upright, honest and straightforward police officers in Tamil Nadu and that it is not an anti-police organization. "We believe in a society that respects the rule of law and an active democratic police system. But here, we are shocked to see the statement of Mr.Abhai Kumar IPS who is the president of Tamil Nadu IPS Officers' Association. We hesitate to believe that this is the opinion of all IPS officers in the State, " he added.

<https://www.lotustimes.org/2023/04/05/peoples-watch-poses-7-questions-on-violations-in-ips-balveer-singh-torture-investigation-expresses-shock-with-statement-of-tamil-nadu-ips-officers-association-president/>