



TN revokes Goondas Act slapped against activist in Sipcot case

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TIRUVANNAMALAI: The state government on Friday revoked Goondas Act imposed on activist Arul Arumugam (45) in connection with the Melma Sipcot protest. Tiruvannamalai Collector B. Murugesh had invoked the Act as per Section 2(1) of the Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982, against Arul Arumugam and six others claiming that their activities were detrimental to public order and equality.



Following widespread condemnation, the government took the decision to revoke the Goondas Act on the six farmers involved in the issue, except Arul Arumugam. On Thursday, the case came up for hearing before the bench of Justice MS Ramesh and Sundar Mohan in the Madras High Court. Arul Arumugam's advocate Agila RS emphasised the need for filing a counter and requested a hearing for further proceedings.

In response, State Additional Public Prosecutor E Raj Thilak said, "The government may reconsider the Goondas Act invoked on Arul Arumugam. We require some time." Consequently, the judges adjourned the case to January 8.

On Friday, the government issued an order to the Tiruvannamalai collector saying that Goondas Act be revoked against Arul Arumugam. The order said, "Considering the requests from various quarters, the government has revoked Goondas Act on Arul Arumugam by the order of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister."

According to sources, Arul is reportedly facing another legal challenge related to the Melma Sipcot issue, with charges under IPC sections 143, 341, 353, and 188. He is currently awaiting bail in this case.

Chandran J, a farmer from Melma, told TNIE "We are delighted, but are not ready to express gratitude to the government. Despite filing a false case against Arul and other farmers, we remain committed to our peaceful sit-in protest. We strongly oppose the implementation of Sipcot's third phase in Melma." Farmers from Melma and 10 other panchayats celebrated the withdrawal of Goondas Act by bursting crackers and distributing sweets.

Book case on T'malai collector, Tiphagne urges CM

Madurai: Human Rights Defenders Federation's (HRDF) Tamil Nadu national secretary Henri Tiphagne in a press statement urged the state government to register a case against Tiruvannamalai collector and police officials who booked activist Arul under Goondas Act. Tiphagne thanked Chief Minister MK Stalin for revoking the Act against Arul. "This incident shows that officials deliberately discriminate against farmers. It is regrettable that this happened under the DMK rule which has portrayed itself as working for social justice," Tiphagne said. He further urged Stalin to take departmental action against Tiruvannamalai collector, adding that he should provide compensation to farmers from his own pocket. Police officials associated with the case should also be punished, Tiphagne added.

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