

Human rights body condemns Savukku Shankar's 'torture', demands shifting him to another jail

Joint Action Against Custodial Torture termed the arrest of YouTuber Felix Gerald illegal, and demanded action against police, magistrate.

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A human rights organisation has demanded punishment of police or prison officials, who had tortured Tamil YouTuber A Shankara alias 'Savukku' Shankar in prison.

Madurai, Tamil Nadu-based Joint Action Against Custodial Torture (JAACT) said in a statement that government clerk-turned-whistleblower Shankar, arrested for his alleged derogatory remarks against police officers, "was subjected to severe torture in the room opposite to remission room in Coimbatore Central Prison".



The assault, using plastic pipes, left Shankar with a fractured arm, the statement issued on Wednesday, 15 May, said.

While "strongly condemning" Shankar's alleged "derogatory and disrespectful remarks" against women police officers and journalists, JAACT said it does not tolerate or accept the torture.

It recalled Shankar's history of humiliating, degrading, and belittling human rights defenders, and his "one-sided support to the school principal in the murder of Srimathi in a private school at Kallakurichi".

Punish torturers

"All forms of torture are to be totally prohibited. The police or prison officials, who indulged in torture are required to be punished according to the law," the rights organisation said.

JAACT also demanded to shift Shankar to another prison, considering the track record of Senthil Kumar, the Superintendent of Prisons in Coimbatore.

The organisation said it had confirmed the torture through reliable sources. It further noted that the authorities had not denied the torture.

However, the prisons department had refuted the charges. "No prisoner has been assaulted in Central Prison, Coimbatore, either by prison personnel or by other prison inmates," it said in a statement. Shankar, arrested on 4 May, allegedly said in an interview that women officers offered sexual favours to a senior officer to get promoted. He is in judicial custody till 28 May.

Felix Gerald's arrest illegal

JAACT also condemned the “illegal” arrest of Felix Gerald, the editor of the YouTube channel RedPix, which ran the interview.

The organisation said the Tamil Nadu police arrested him from Delhi without a warrant, and “he was not informed of the grounds of his arrest and no transit warrant was obtained from any court in Delhi”.

JAACT said the police violated the CrPC and articles 20, 21, and 22 of the Indian Constitution while arresting Gerald on 10 May. It further said he was abused by women police officers, while transporting him in a van from Chennai.

The rights outfit felt the raids on Felix's residence and office, and seizure of costly equipment was a “mean ploy to stop RedPix media from operating”. It demanded “immediate disciplinary actions against police inspector Veeramani and his team for the illegal arrest of Felix Gerald in Delhi, as well as all higher officials, including the superintendent of police in Tiruchirappalli”.

The organisation also demanded that the Madras High Court initiate disciplinary action against the judicial magistrate, who remanded Gerald in judicial custody “contrary to the apex court's directions” in an earlier case. It wanted Gerald to be shifted to another prison to protect his life.

Shankar, recently [booked under the Goonda Act](#), has several FIRs registered against him, including for allegedly possessing marijuana, forgery, stalking, harassing women, and [inciting communal violence](#).

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