

Call for urgent action to trace ‘missing’ activist Mugilan



STAFF REPORTER

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He is said to have gone missing after a press meet on the Thoothukudi firing

Human Rights Defenders Alert - India (HRDA), an organisation that works to defend human rights activists facing threats, has appealed to the Chennai

Police Commissioner to take immediate steps to trace environmental activist R.S. Mugilan, who is said to have been missing since Friday.

Mr. Mugilan went missing during a train journey from Chennai to Madurai after addressing the media in Chennai regarding the police firing in Thoothukudi during the protests against Sterlite Copper last May, the HRDA said.

The organisation stated that during the press meet, Mr. Mugilan released video footage indicating that the violence and the subsequent firing were orchestrated by the police, in connivance with the management of Sterlite Copper. He also alleged that senior police officials in the ranks of Inspector General of Police and Deputy Inspector General of Police were involved in the violence.

Henri Tiphagne, national working secretary, HRDA, said in his petition to the Chennai Police Commissioner that Mr. Mugilan boarded a train to Madurai from the Egmore railway station on Friday night. In one of his calls to a colleague, he said he feared action by the police since he had named and made accusations against senior police officials in front of the media.

Pointing out that his cell phone was active till 1.45 a.m. on Saturday, Mr. Tiphagne said there was reason to believe that Mr. Mugilan was abducted from the train.

He alleged that senior police officials were involved in the violence