

Missing

TN activist Mugilan, who alleged involvement of top cops in Sterlite firing, missing

The Madras High Court issued notices to Chennai's police commissioner and the Superintendents of Police of Kanchipuram and Villupuram districts in the matter.

Megha Kaveri | Monday, February 18, 2019 - 16:35

Facebook

Two days after Mugilan — the activist who alleged that senior police officers were involved in the Sterlite firing — went missing, the Madras High Court issued notices to the Commissioner of Police, Chennai and the Superintendents of Police of Kanchipuram and Villupuram districts based on a habeas corpus petition filed in the court.

The petition was filed by human rights lawyer and activist Henri Tiphagne. It stated that Mugilan, the Coordinator of Tamil Nadu Environment Protection Movement, has been missing since Saturday morning and that despite repeated complaints, the police has not filed a 'missing person' FIR. The petition also stated that it is suspected that Mugilan was picked up by the

state government over his role in exposing the alleged involvement of senior police officers — Sailesh Kumar Yadav (Inspector General of Police, South Zone) and Kapil Kumar Saratkar (Deputy Inspector General of Police, Tirunelveli Range) — in the open firing that took place in Thoothukudi on May 22, 2018.

Mugilan was travelling from Egmore in Chennai to Madurai in the Nagercoil special train on the night of February 15, after he held a press meet in Chennai about the Sterlite shooting. In the press meet, he named the two police officers and accused them of being complicit when miscreants torched government vehicles and destroyed CCTV cameras.

In his petition, Henri also mentioned that Mugilan's phone has not had connectivity since 1.45am on February 16, when the phone was near Villupuram. "Mr Mugilan had also expressed his apprehensions to Mr Sridhar (Mugilan's colleague) that the police may take actions against him because he had exposed the role of higher police officers in Thoothukudi police firing during the press meet," read the petition.

Expressing that there are suspicions of foul play, Henri in his petition stated that all his enquiries with the police control rooms of Chennai, Kanchipuram and Villupuram to know if Mugilan had been taken into custody proved futile. He also stated that despite filing separate complaints about this with the Commissioner of Police, Chennai; Superintendent of Police, Kanchipuram; and Superintendent of Police, Villupuram and also sending petitions to the Chief Secretary with a copy to the

Home Secretary, not a single FIR had been filed.

“The delay in tracing Mr Mugilan, who has spoken against the very high officers of the State is at a risk and his whereabouts have to be ascertained and safety be assured without any further delay,” read the petition.

The petition was heard by justices M Sathyanarayanan and Nirmal Kumar who issued notices to the concerned parties and posted the case for February 22.

The press meet

Mugilan headed a press meet in Chennai on Friday, in which he showed footage from two CCTV cameras inside the District Collectorate which allegedly indicated that the IG knew about the riots in advance. The cameras from which Mugilan claims to have sourced the footage from were destroyed by armed men later that day, when the protestors entered the District Collectorate.

“We are accusing directly. South Zone IG Sailesh Kumar Yadav and Tirunelveli Range DIG Kapil Kumar Saratkar colluded with the management of Sterlite and committed the murder. We are saying they must be arrested for murder,” he [told reporters](#) on February 15. In that press meet, he also urged that Sterlite CEO Anil Agarwal be imprisoned and Sterlite be blacklisted.

On May 22, 2018, the police opened fire at anti-Sterlite protestors who were opposing the expansion of the Sterlite copper smelter plant. This firing killed 13 civilians and ended up injuring scores who took part in the protest.