



**February 23, 2019**

**To,**

**Mr. Khaleel Ahmed**

National Focal Point - Human Rights Defenders & Deputy Registrar  
National Human Rights Commission  
Manav Adhikar Bhawan,  
Block-C, GPO Complex, INA,  
New Delhi – 110 023  
Email: [hrd-nhrc@nic.in](mailto:hrd-nhrc@nic.in)

**Dear Sir,**

***Sub: People's Watch- India - Urgent Appeal for Action – Tamil Nadu -  
Missing of environmental rights activist Mr. Mugilan - Regarding***

**Greetings from People's Watch!**

People's Watch is a Human Rights Organisation, involved in Human Rights Monitoring, Intervention, Legal Assistance, Documentation, Publication, Training, Campaigning, Networking, Research and Education.

We are writing to express our grave concern over the missing of environmental rights defender Mr. Mugilan from Chennai after he addressed a press conference where he alleged the role of police officials in Thoothukudi police firing.

**Status of Human Rights Defender:**

Mr. Mugilan is an environmental rights activist and has been actively advocating against environmental issues such as sand mining and is also involved with anti-Sterlite people's movement in Thoothukudi and anti-nuclear protest in Koodankulam. He is the Coordinator of Tamil Nadu Environment Protection Committee.

**Details of the Incident**

On February 15, 2019, Mr. Mugilan addressed a press meet in Chennai around 11.30 AM regarding the killing of 13 persons by police firing in Thoothukudi during the anti-Sterlite protests on May 22, 2018. During the press meet he released a report and video titled 'Sterlite: Hidden Truth', regarding the violence that unfolded prior to police

firing on May 22, 2018 in Thoothukudi and had alleged that the violence and the police firing thereafter was orchestrated by the police in connivance with the management of Sterlite Industries. Mr. Mugilan also implicated that higher police officers were involved in this violence and he directly named the then Inspector General of Police Mr. Shailesh Kumar Yadav and Deputy Inspector General of Police Mr. Kapil Kumar Saratkar. He also released a video explaining their implication on the violence with various CCTV camera recordings.

Later, on the same day, on February 15, 2019 he along with his colleague Mr. V.P. Ponnarasan met few of his friends in Chennai and reached Egmore Railway Station around 10.30 PM. While Mr. Ponnarasan left to Karur in Mangalore Express train, Mr. Mugilan took Nagercoil Express train to Madurai. His last conversations from his mobile phone included calls to Mr. Aseervatham of People's Watch around 7 PM on February 15, 2019, to whom he told that he was in a train and will reach Madurai the next morning. Later at night he spoke to his colleague Mr. Sridhar and told him that he is travelling in Nagercoil special train and will reach Madurai by 10.30 AM on the next day. Mr. Mugilan also stated to Mr. Sridhar that he is apprehending actions by police because he had exposed the role of higher police officers in Thoothukudi police firing during the press meet. His mobile phone was active till 1.45 AM on February 16, 2019 and has lost connectivity from Olukkur, Villupuram District.

It is strongly suspected that Mr. Mugilan has been abducted after he had alleged the role of higher police officers in the Thoothukudi police firing and the violence. Though complaints have been sent to the Chief Minister's office and the Director General of Police, Tamil Nadu no action has been taken to trace Mr. Mugilan. On February 18, 2019, a writ of habeas corpus petition was filed in Madras High Court, which upon considering the matter directed the police to submit their response by February 22, 2018.

### **Appeal:**

We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps and:

- Order an immediate, independent, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned incident of missing of Mr. Mugilan and ensure his safety

- Immediately order the Special Rapporteur (South) of the Hon'ble Commission to initiate investigations along with the Investigation Department in the incident
- Order for a status report on the incident from the Chief Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu and Director General of Police, Tamil Nadu

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



**Mohan**  
**Associate Director, People's Watch**