

Madurai: An all-women independent high-level committee comprising retired bureaucrats, police officers, lawyers and members of the civil society has been constituted by the human rights NGO, People's Watch to inquire into the Pollachi sexual abuse case.

Executive director of People's Watch, Henri Tiphagne appealed to the victims or those in knowledge about the perpetrators to come forward and depose before the committee. Four men - Sabarirajan, Thirunavukkarasu, Satish and Vasanthakumar have been arrested so far based on a complaint by one woman of alleged sexual abuse and extortion and so far recovered four videos from those arrested.

Four others were arrested for assault on the brother of one of the victims and are out on bail. Among those arrested include a now expelled AIADMK functionary.

The presence of retired bureaucrats and those who served in the police department in the committee will also keep the investigators on their toes, reasoned Tiphagne.

Some of the members of the committee are retired IPS officer G Thilagavathy, retired IAS officer, Qudsia Gandhi, advocates Geeta Ramaseshan, Sudha Ramalingam, activists among others.

The committee is expected to meet within weeks and chalk out its course of action.

People's Watch also demanded the ouster of Coimbatore superintendent of police, R Pandiarajan for violating Supreme Court guidelines and revealing the identity of the complainant.

Recalling that the SP became notorious for slapping a woman protester during the protests against Tasmac outlets in Tirupur when he was the deputy superintendent of police (DSP) in 2017, Tiphagne said that the police department has erred in bestowing the investigation to an official insensitive to human rights.

People's Watch also appealed for judicial intervention in the issue and sought a court-monitored special investigation team to probe the matter.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/madurai/ngo-forms-all-women-panel-to-inquire-case/articleshowprint/68400341.cms>