

HC seeks counter affidavits in custodial death case

B. Tilak Chandar

APRIL 17, 2021 20:02 IST

Madurai

The Madurai Bench of Madras High Court on Saturday directed all the parties involved in the Avaniapuram custodial death case to file their counter affidavits.

The court had taken up the matter suo motu after it was alleged the father of the victim was coerced to withdraw his petition seeking a CBI probe into the incident that took place in 2019.

A Division Bench of Justices T. S. Sivagnanam and S. Ananthi sought the response from the State, the father of the victim and four men Athi Narayanan, Kathir, Loganathan and Ramesh alleged to be behind the withdrawal of the petition. Earlier, the father had informed the court that he was convinced that his son's death was not a case of custodial death.

The court initiated suo motu proceedings based on the letter written to the High Court Bench by advocate Henri Tiphagne who represented the father pro bono in the case. The petitioner, P. Muthukaruppan, father of 22-year-old victim M. Balamurugan, had alleged that his son had sustained injuries in police custody and later died at the Government Rajaji Hospital.

It was said that Balamurugan and his associates were arrested for their alleged involvement in the kidnap of a youth. The group demanded ransom from the youth's parents. However, in an unexpected turn of events, Muthukaruppan decided to withdraw the petition. Mr. Henri Tiphagne alleged that the petitioner had been threatened to withdraw his petition.

In his letter, Mr. Henri Tiphagne said that the father decided to withdraw the petition because of the threat from the local police. He said that the parents were being coerced not to depose against the police officers said to be involved in the case. The court adjourned the hearing in the case for the parties to file their counter affidavits.