

Vignesh died of custodial torture, says joint action committee of advocates

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The committee demands arrest of police personnel responsible for the man's death

A joint action committee against custodial torture comprising advocates and social workers on Saturday released a fact-finding report on the custodial death of Vignesh, 25, in a city police station recently and said that it was a clear case of death due to custodial torture. They demanded the arrest of police personnel responsible for his death.

The committee comprising senior advocate Sudha Ramalingam, advocate and director of People's Watch Henri Tiphagne, People's Watch state coordinator I.Aseervatham, advocates B.S. Ajeetha and Milton addressed the media on Saturday. They asked the DGP CB-CID to announce the name of the investigation officer in the case immediately so that witnesses could approach him and share information.

The fact-finding team said that on the night of April, 18, Vignesh and his friend Suresh were taken into custody in the late night at Kellys by the night-round police and tortured brutally using the police helmet. Vignesh died in police custody the next day and on the same day, the autopsy was done and the body cremated. They alleged that the guidelines issued by Madras High Court relating to custodial death were not followed and the kith and kin of the victim were denied the right to access the body or to take photographs even before the commencement of autopsy.

While registering a first information report (FIR), the CB-CID should include Section 302 (Punishment for Murder) and provisions of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act since Vignesh and Suresh belonged to the Scheduled Caste, the Committee urged.

The investigation officers of the CB-CID should arrest the personnel who were suspended, the inspector, the Assistant Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner who were in charge that night and other officials who were allegedly responsible for the death. As per Witness Protection Scheme 2019, the Principal Sessions Judge should initiate proceedings and receive petitions from witnesses and adequate protection should be given to the witnesses, the committee said.

They wanted to seize all CCTV footage from Ayanavaram, Foreshore Estate and Secretariat Colony police station limits that recorded the sequence of events on April 18, 19 and 20 and scrutinise them. They sought the Chief Justice of Madras High Court to take suo motu cognisance of the matter and to monitor the progress of investigation so as to prevent the recurrence of such custodial death hereafter.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/vignesh-died-of-custodial-torture-says-joint-action-committee-of-advocates/article65370245.ece>