

# Rights activists want HC to take up police custody death case

OP ARULN | DC  
CHENNAI, JUNE 13

Rights activists have appealed to the Madras High Court to initiate suo moto proceedings relating to the death of a person in police custody on Sunday in Chennai.

In an appeal, Henri Tiphagne, Executive Director of People's Watch, a Madurai based NGO, requested the Madras High Court to monitor the probe relating to

custodial death of S. Rajasekar alias Appu in the Kodungaiyur police station, Chennai. He also sought the State Human Rights Commission to intervene in the issue in finding the truth behind the death.

Welcoming the Commissioner's move to suspend inspector George Miller Ponraj, SI Kanniyappan and constables Manivanan, Jayashankar and Sathiamoorthy Henri Tiphagne recalled that State Human

Rights Commission slapped a fine of ₹5 lakh on George Miller Ponraj for assaulting a conductor and another case pending before the SHRC. He also hailed the decision of DGP Sylendra Babu transferring the case to the CBCID on the day of the death of Rajasekar.

He said the inspector of police who has been suspended had two earlier complaints on him pending before the SHRC. The first case is related to Ambattur

Police Station for brutally attacking an MTC driver. He was slapped with a fine of ₹5 lakh last year. Another complaint by Devendran has been pending against Ponraj, when he served as an Inspector in Prohibition Enforcement Wing at Ambattur during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

It is shocking to note that the same inspector has been suspended now in this case. He requested the Judiciary

and SHRC to immediately verify the facts and recommend the government to ensure that disciplinary proceedings are initiated against him soon.

In the wake of custodial death of Vignesh in G5 Secretariat Colony Police Station, Chennai, the DGP directed the cops that no one should be kept in police custody during night time across the State. A few days after the direction, Rajasekar dies in the police cus-

tody in Chennai.

Alleging that Rajasekar was kept at the police station's outpost before the death, Henri Tiphagne questioned that how can an accused be kept in a police outpost? He suspected that he was kept in the outpost only to avoid surveillance of CCTV cameras. He said the CCTV camera footage in the police station and the outpost must be seized without any delay. An officer of the rank of an

SP must conduct detailed inquiry soon.

He also urged the court to form a team of three forensic doctors from different Medical Colleges headed by a professor to conduct the autopsy and the videotape of the entire procedure. His body may be retained in the mortuary for the Court/SHRC to determine whether it has been done properly in its suo moto proceedings and only then the body may be given to the

family. The team shall be accompanied by a scientific officer.

Meanwhile, the State Human Rights Commission Chairperson, Justice K.Baskaran, directed the Commissioner to file a report regarding the death of Rajasekar in four weeks. The commission also directed the Commissioner to follow guidelines laid down in the directions of Madras High court dated December 2, 2020.