

Kodungaiyur custodial death: Family claims injuries on body, SHRC orders report from Chennai top cop

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CHENNAI: A day after the death of a history-sheeter, S Rajasekar alias Appu (33), in police custody at Kodungaiyur in Chennai, his mother Usha Rani on Monday said she had seen several external injuries on her son's body and alleged he had been tortured by police.

His family refused to accept the body after the post-mortem examination, which was conducted in the presence of the judicial magistrate. Speaking to reporters at Stanley Hospital, Usha said her son had been healthy and she could not accept the police's claim that he'd suddenly developed seizures and died. She said the policemen involved in the case should be booked for murder.

"The CM should look into the issue and provide us justice. I want my son's to be the last death in police custody," she said, alleging the police had warned her and her family to remain silent on the issue. Although police claimed they had picked up Rajasekar for questioning in a jewellery theft case on Saturday morning, his family claimed he was taken into custody on Sunday morning.

Tamilselvan, Rajasekar's family friend, told *The New Indian Express* they would not take the body home as the post-mortem was conducted without their consent. "We only learnt of his death through TV channels," he said. On Monday, the State Human Rights Commission took suo motu cognizance of the case and ordered Chennai Police Commissioner Shankar Jiwala to submit a report within four weeks.

'Seize CCTV footage in station'

Late Sunday night, the five police personnel involved in the case Kodungaiyur inspector George Miller Ponraj, sub-inspector Kanniyappan, head constables Jaisekar and Manivannan, and constable Sathiyamurthy were suspended.

DGP C Sylendra Babu had ordered a CB-CID probe into the death the same night. In a press conference on Sunday, Addl Commissioner (L&O North) TS Anbu said that Rajasekar was fine during the inquiry and later developed health complications. Another police officer had told *The New Indian Express* on Sunday night that Rajasekar was taken into custody Saturday morning from Manali.

He said Rajasekar had died while being taken to Stanley Hospital and preliminary inquiries suggested he'd died due to low blood pressure. ***Meanwhile, People's Watch executive director Henri Tiphagne said the inspector involved in the case already had two SHRC complaints against him.***

He said that Rajasekar had been kept at a police outpost at night despite the DGP's recent direction that no one should be kept in police custody at night. "The CCTV footage in the said police station and the said outpost have to be seized without any delay," Tiphagne said.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/2022/jun/14/kodungaiyurcustodial-death-family-claims-injuries-on-body-shrc-orders-report-from-chennai-top-cop-2465263.html>