

# Karur activist was murdered: HRDA

Fact finding team seeks action against officials including collector, SP and local police

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@ Madurai

FLAGGING the alleged murder of activist R Jaganathan, a fact-finding team from the Human Rights Defenders Alert (HRDA) and his relatives on Monday sought action against Karur administration officials, who have been serving from 2015. They said officials, including the collector, district superintendent of police and K Paramathi police are responsible for Jaganathan's murder.

Jaganathan was a farmer from Kalipalayam in Karur and was allegedly murdered on September 10. A truck ran over him while he was riding a bike.

Selva Kumar, who operates Annai Blue Metals stone quarry, from Karur, was arrested with regard to the murder case. On September 17, under MLA Abdul Samad's supervision, eight members of the fact-finding team went to Paramathi village near Kalipalayam for probe. According to the team, Annai Blue Metals stone quarry has been operating without government permission since 2015 and along with them, many other quarries are operating illegally without even name boards, of

which few are digging more than 500 feet deep, which is beyond the permitted level.

A member of the fact-finding team, Christina Samy said, "In 2019, Jaganathan petitioned the police to shut down the quarry, because it affected nearby farming fields. "Selva Kumar's goons tried to murder him twice, but he survived with injuries. A case was also registered against Selva Kumar. Despite the threats, Jaganathan passed a resolution in his village grama sabha on August 15,

and the quarry was closed on September 8, two days before his murder." Dismissing the cause of the death as an accident, G Mohan, Jaganathan's relative said the truck ran over his body several times, as per witnesses.

HRDA also demanded police protection for Jaganathan's family members and witnesses in the case along with an additional ₹19 lakh solatium to the family, which should be collected from the officials for their involvement in the murder. They said the report will be submitted to the Tamil Nadu Human Rights Commission. The State government had given a compensation to ₹1 lakh.



**Jaganathan passed a resolution in his village grama sabha on August 15, and the quarry was closed on September 8, two days before his murder**

Christina Samy, HRDA