

TAMIL NADU

# Mugilan's family raises questions about CB-CID investigation

**S. Vijay Kumar**

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## Ask why the probe agency did not interrogate police officials

Rights activists have questioned why the CB-CID did not examine senior police officials, whose alleged complicity in the firing on anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi was exposed by Mugilan hours before his mysterious disappearance.

Pointing out that over 200 people were examined by the investigating agency, the activist's son Kaar Muhilan said all those questioned by the police were either his family's friends or well-wishers.

"My father stood against the sand mafia, Sterlite plant and other projects that were hazardous to the environment and people. The day he exposed the involvement of senior police officers in the police firing, my father went missing. The police have not examined those police officials...it took 12 days for the police to confirm that my father did board a train to Madurai," he said, wondering how the police who were monitoring his father round-the-clock were not able to locate him even after 100 days.

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People's Union for Civil Liberties national general secretary V. Suresh said Mr. Mugilan had exposed the presence of an Inspector-General of Police and Deputy-Inspector of Police in the Collectorate in Thoothukudi when protesters allegedly came to attack the building.

"This is contrary to the theory of the police who claimed that no senior police official was present in the Collectorate. This only strengthens the suspicion that the firing on anti-Sterlite protesters was orchestrated by the police who acted in collusion with the Sterlite management," he said.

Dr. Suresh said the disappearance of Mr. Mugilan was a cause for concern because it happened hours after he exposed the role of police in the firing incident. As regards the rape charges, the activist had to face the due process of law. But the primary concern was his safety and security.

Henri Tiphagne, executive director of People's Watch, a civil rights organisation, who recently moved a habeas corpus petition in the Madras High Court said it was not understandable why the police had not examined the Sterlite management and senior police officials, whose alleged complicity in the firing was exposed by Mr. Mugilan.

Stating that the Central Bureau of Investigation, which was probing the Thoothukudi firing case, was in possession of the fresh video evidence brought out by Mr. Mugilan, he said the timing of the rape case against the activist was suspicious, though he would have to face it legally.

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