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PRESS RELEASE

IPS officers and Judicial Magistrates to also be closely monitored: in cases of violations of police torture despite Sathankulam.

People's Watch strongly condemns the barbarous, vicious and treacherous acts of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment undertaken by Mr. Balveer Singh IPS, the Additional Superintendent of Police, Ambasamudram of Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu as is just now revealed to have taken place on 10th March 2023 at the premises of the Ambasamudram Police Station.

It is ghastly and horrifying to note that an IPS rank officer has dared to stoop to personally engage himself not only in the brutal torture of 6 persons, namely, Esakimuthu, Mariappan, Chellappa, Mariappan (2), Arul @Antony and Suresh who were arrested in Ambasamudram PS Crime No 49 of 2023 u/s 147,148,341, 294(b), 323, 307 and 506(ii) IPC and remanded on 10.03.2023 at 11.30 PM. dared to use callipers to pull out the teeth of the accused causing extreme pain and suffering and then forcibly open their mouth and stuff it with gravel stones and slap the accused on both their cheeks causing further damage to their teeth and injuries to the inner part of the jaws and mouth accompanied by extensive bleeding. This inhuman act takes place in Tirunelveli district by an IPS officer who has dared to engage in this act of torture personally by removing his police uniform at the police station and then wearing a pair of white gloves and personally engaging in the acts of torture all while nine policemen accused in the infamous "Sathankulam custodial death case" are still behind bars from June 2020 for more than two years and nine months.

What is surprising is that though this case has now come out, the entire Sub Division has several such cases where the victims have not dared to speak because of the consequences.

When these persons were remanded to judicial custody before the Cheranmahadevi Judicial Magistrate, they were warned by the police accompanying them, not to speak about what they had been subjected to and if they did so that the women folk in their families would be in life danger. It is once again surprising but the Judicial Magistrate, Cheranmahadevi, similar to the then Judicial Magistrate of Sathankulam, failed to notice such grievous injuries resulting out of torture while remanding the said accused.

The "remand advocate" of the Taluk Legal Services Committee who is supposed to meet every person brought for remand before being produced for remand, is yet another functionary whom the Ambasamudram criminal justice system under Mr. Balveer Singh IPS has successfully managed to dodge. A Social Justice government cannot justify by any sketch of imagination, such brutal torture taking place when the Chief Minister himself is responsible for the police department.

People's Watch urgently demands the following acts:

1. Though we are aware that Mr. Balveer Singh IPS has been kept on compulsory wait, the brutality of the violation that he has directly engaged in along with other policemen of the Ambasamudram Police Station is sufficient cause for his immediate suspension and after the Executive Magistrate's enquiry is over the remaining can be suspended and criminal action initiated.

2. The High Court portfolio judges responsible for Tirunelveli district should immediately enquire into how the six victims of such brutal torture, all of whom would have suffered severe injuries on different parts of their bodies, including injuries to their testicals, was not detected by the Judicial Magistrate, Cheranmahadevi. The inaction against the Sathankulam Judicial Magistrate in June 2020 citing COVID, has now proved that the Judicial Magistrate in the state need to be strictly monitored as regards such gruesome violations where criminals in uniform not only flout the law but are consistently been showing scant respect to the majesty of the Judiciary.
3. The Hon'ble Executive Chairman of the State Legal Services Authority, the Member Secretary of the State Legal Services Authority and the Chairman of the Taluk Legal Services Committee of Cheranmahadevi should immediately undertake an enquiry into how the legal aid advocate attending to remand at the Judicial Magistrate Court, Cheranmahadevi did not have occasion to meet with the 6 persons who were remanded after being subjected to such brutal torture.
4. The Tamil Nadu Government has been undertaking religiously a wellness program for policemen spending crores of rupees and utilizing the services of not only the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) Bangalore but also the expertise of Dr. C. Ramasubramanian, mental health specialist and the Chellamuthu Foundation in Madurai. All these have been undertaken only to ensure that policemen on duty, be they officers or their sub-ordinates are not mentally ill and enjoy good mental health so that the public are safe when they are on duty. The DGP, Mr. Sylendra Babu IPS has to ensure that Mr. Balveer Singh IPS ASP Ambasamdrum is subjected to strict psychiatric and mental health examination before he is put back into any form of policing at any point of time after his present compulsory wait.
5. People's Watch demands a complete overall of the District SP's intelligence system functioning in Ambasamudram Sub-Division whereby such an incident that is said have taken place on 10th March 2023 and many others which are yet to be spoken of, have not been officially brought to the attention of the SP. This points out to the total breakdown of the intelligence system that needs to be completely reviewed and actions initiated against all those district level intelligence officers at police stations in the Ambasamudram Sub Division who were responsible for hiding the truth.
6. The ADGP intelligence of Tamil Nadu has also to conduct an enquiry to find out how such serious violations of human rights have escaped the attention of the ADGP even when the Tamil Nadu Legislative assembly was in session. People's Watch recalls that the custodial death of Vignesh took place last year in Chennai during the previous budget session where even the Hon'ble Chief Minister was misled for more than two weeks by his intelligence police.

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