Death of 17-yr-old: NGO wants govt to inspect all homes

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Madurai

PEOPLE'S Watch, a human rights NGO, asked the Tamil Nadu government to consider the case of Gokul Sri, a juvenile who died at an observation home, as a wake-up call and set up a special committee to inspect all the observation homes across the state on Wednesday.

On addressing the journalists at his office in Chokikulam, People's Watch Executive Director Henri Tiphagne said the state government must see Gokul Sri's case as a wake-up call to stop the harassment endured by juveniles in observation homes, citing that many children have been injured after being tortured in the Chengalpattu district juvenile correction facility. "A special committee should be formed comprising of senior women advocates to inspect all the observation homes in the state," he added.

Henri demanded the state government to provide ₹10 lakh compensation to P Priya, the mother of Gokul Sri, and arrange a government job to help her support her other five children's education.

Quoting Priya's petition to the Chengalpattu district collector, he reiterated the need to take action against District Child Protection Officer Sivakumar, who allegedly threatened and abducted Priya for some days and tried hiding the evidence related to the boy's death. He also accused the department of social defence director S Valarmathi, for delaying the inspection at the Chengalpattu home and for non-submission of the report.
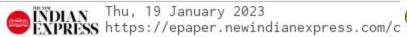
"The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) shouldn't interfere in the case, as the State Human Rights Commission investigation is underway," he added.

The 17-year-old Gokul Sri from Kannadapalayam in Chengalpattu district was arrested by the Tambaram railway police on December 29 for allegedly stealing a battery. On December 31, he died at the district juvenile correction facility under suspicious circumstances. Recently, six persons, including the superintendent of the home in this connection.