

## Rubbed stone on teeth, beaten brutally for two hours: teen details custodial torture in TN

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Arun Kumar said he was beaten on his buttocks with a lathi by 2 policemen and the ASP rubbed and hit a stone against his teeth causing him to lose 4 teeth and break one tooth in half, and being beaten for 2 hours despite showing stitches at the back of his head.

Chennai: One of the victims, who had allegedly endured police torture in custody in Tamil Nadu's Tirunelveli district, narrated the ordeal he had gone through at a press conference organised under the People's Watch, a human rights organization.

K Arun Kumar, the victim, met the media with his mother Rajeshwari, minor brother, and Henri Tiphange, executive director of Madurai-based NGO People's Watch, and described how brutally he and his brother were tortured by suspended Ambasamudram assistant superintendent of police Balveer Singh.

On March 10, Arun Kumar and several others were taken into custody in connection with a brawl and reportedly subjected to brutal treatment by ASP Singh. Afterwards, Singh allegedly threatened the men, warning them not to speak out about the violence they had experienced.

People's Watch demanded that an FIR be filed against IPS officer Balveer Singh and other police personnel for allegedly beating detainees and breaking their teeth with large stones and cutting pliers.

Arun Kumar recounted that on March 10 around 1 pm, he had been taken to Ambai station where he encountered others who were involved in a brawl. He stated that the ASP, who had previously been wearing a uniform, changed into a tracksuit and T-shirt and put on gloves. Kumar reported hearing the screams of Chellappa and Marimuthu when they were called inside, and then he himself was called in by the ASP.

According to Kumar, two policemen held his hands tightly and kicked him with their shoes. Kumar reported that if he did not open his mouth, the policemen beat him on his buttocks with a lathi. When he did open his mouth, the ASP rubbed and hit a stone against his teeth, causing him to lose four teeth completely and break one tooth in half. Kumar alleged that the officer continued to beat him in his legs, hands, and head for two hours, despite Kumar informing him about the stitches at the back of his head.

Kumar further alleged that after the beating, they were taken to the VK Puram station where the police threatened them to say to the magistrate that they had not been tortured. Kumar stated that the ASP threatened to break his leg if he engaged in hooliganism again, and further threatened to remove his leg and keep it aside if he spoke to anyone about the torture.

Kumar also stated that the policemen ordered them to clean the blood stains on the floor themselves. According to Kumar, the doctors did not provide them with proper medication.

Kumar's 17-year-old brother claimed that he had been subjected to similar torture when he went to the police station in search of his brother. He reported that the police rubbed a large stone against his teeth and beat him with lathis.

Talking to the media, the victim's mother said that her elder son was taken into custody by the police on March 9, with the police alleging that he was involved in a street fight. When her younger son went to the police station on the same day to find his brother, he was denied permission to meet him. Later that day, a police officer named Boghan came to their house and requested information about her younger son, such as his name, age, Aadhaar details, and other personal information.

The police claimed that her younger son's life was in danger and that someone was planning to harm him. The mother, fearing for her son's safety, gave them all the necessary details, including information about their caste. However, on March 10, her younger son was also taken into custody by the police.

At the press conference, Henry Tiphagne remarked that once the culprits responsible for the custodial violence are charged, they must also be charged with violating the Juvenile Justice Act of 2015 and the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989.

He claimed that the police were aware of the victim's Scheduled Caste status even before he was detained, and therefore, they should be held accountable for violating these laws.

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