

Ambasamudram custodial violence: Minor victim's parents demand FIR against police

In the press conference, one of the victims, who was a minor, his mother recounted the ordeals they had endured at the Ambasamudram police station.

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People's Watch, a human rights organisation, and the family of one of the victims of custodial violence case at Tirunelveli's Ambasamudram police station held a press conference on Wednesday, April 5, demanding FIR against IPS officer Balveer Singh and other police personnels. The Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) of Ambasamudram Balveer Singh has been accused of beating detainees and breaking their teeth using large stones and cutting pliers.

The victim and his mother who were present at the press conference along with Henry Tiphagne, lawyer and founder of People's Watch recounted the ordeals they had endured at the Ambasamudram police station.

During the press conference, Henry Tiphagne said that when the guilty persons in the custodial violence case are booked, they should also be booked for violating the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 and the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 because the police knew that the victim belonged to a Scheduled Caste even before he was detained.

He said, "When the victims and their mother file a complaint, an FIR has to be registered. Just transferring the police officers or placing them on wait lists will not be enough. What was the judicial magistrate doing? Could the magistrate not have called them separately and asked how they got these injuries?"

The victim's mother said that her elder son was detained by the police on March 9 claiming that he was involved in a street fight. When her younger son went to the police station on the same day in search of his brother, the mother said he was not allowed to meet his brother. The victims' mother further added that a police officer named Boghan visited their house later in the day and sought details of her younger son including his name, age, and Aadhaar details, among others. The police told the mother that her younger son's life was in danger and somebody was going to kill him. Fearing for the safety of her son, she gave them all the details including information about their caste. However, on March 10, her younger son was also detained by the police.

The mother said, "They took my son to the VK Puram Police Station but they did not let me or my husband to meet him. They asked me to buy my sons food and my elder son could not even get up and his pants were stained with blood. My younger son [the minor] was made to stand with his underwear. I started crying looking at their state but they asked me to leave the station so I did." The mother further recounted how the police threatened them to not speak about their torture at the hospital or the court and they complied. Receipts of the mother being made to arrange a taxi to take the detainees to the court were also displayed during the press meet.

Meanwhile, the minor victim pointed out that it was ASP Balveer Singh who had hit him and kept questioning if he and his brother were involved in "rowdyism." He said that the ASP beat him on his back, head and below his knees and further threatened him that "his legs would be broken" if he told

anyone about being beaten. Worried that he might be harmed, the victim told the court that the police did not beat him but it was an injury that he sustained after falling off a bike. The victim also said, "On March 10, I was beaten again even though I had gotten stitches in my head the previous day. Even the doctors did not ask how I got these injuries"

Explaining how various sections of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 were violated by the cops, Henry Tiphagne said the minor victim was taken to the court by uniformed cops even though it was against the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015.

He added, "The only mistake the victim made was going in search of his brother. Had the police investigated, they would have known what the issue was but they did not do that."

Commenting on the remarks of the Tamil Nadu IPS Officers Association claiming that Balveer Singh was subjected to a 'media trial', Henry said, "It is the duty of the media to question such events. Human rights organisations have a duty. The 'media trial' is the reason why Balveer Singh was suspended." He also demanded that Chief Minister MK Stalin must take action against the IPS officers association as well.

<https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/ambasamudram-custodial-violence-minor-victim-s-parents-demand-fir-against-police-175555>