



'Fast-track cases against cops in Ambasamudram torture incident'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Madurai: Human rights activists in Madurai have condemned the continued service of police personnel, including a serving IPS officer, who were allegedly involved in the 2023 Ambasamudram custodial torture case. Under the banner of Joint Action Against Custodial Torture (JAACT)-Tamil Nadu, the activists on Saturday pointed out that unlike the recent Ajith Kumar custodial death case, where swift action was taken, no arrests were made in the Ambasamudram case, and all accused officers remain in active duty. They demanded fast-tracking of all pending custodial torture and death cases and sought compensation for victims and their families.

Henri Tiphagne, adviser, JAACT, noted that Balveer Singh IPS and 13 other police personnel in his team were booked in four different cases of custodial torture and all are pending before court.

"After placing Balveer Singh under compulsory waiver and then suspended, in Jan 2024, the Tamil Nadu govt revoked his suspension. Now, he receives his full salary and



JUSTICE DELAYED: Henri Tiphagne (2nd from left) said cases booked against Balveer Singh IPS and 13 other police personnel are pending in court

since March 2024, he has been serving as assistant commandant (ASP), Tamil Nadu Special VIII Battalion in Tihar Jail, New Delhi. He is being protected and kept safe in a place away from Tamil Nadu," he said.

Tiphagne also pointed out that since the first hearing in the JM court No 1, Tirunelveli, held on Dec 13, 2023, Singh has appeared for only 10 of the 22 hearings held so far, with the trial yet to begin.

The JAACT also condemned that IAS officer P Amudha's interim report on the case was made public and submitted in court but her final report has not yet been furnished despite a Sept 2023 high court order.

"We are to initiate contempt proceedings against Amudha regarding the mat-

ter. We also want to point out that the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act which was there in the original FIR, was removed in the charge sheet, merely because Balveer Singh belongs to the scheduled tribe status though his other co-accused are from the backward castes. The SC/ST Act can still be invoked against other accused. This clearly amounts to 'institutional cheating and suppression of material facts' in an investigation by the CBCID," added Tiphagne.

The JAACT also demanded for all victims to be provided compensation and apology as they are victims of gross police torture. "The high court must fast-track all pending cases of custodial torture and custodial deaths and in turn ensure that its registrars and the Legal Services Authority also periodically monitor such cases of custodial torture and deaths. There can be a special court for all cases of torture, namely, in the designated district human rights court, under the Protection of Human Rights Act with day to day trials being foreseen so that speedy trial assured in practice," they stated.