

People's Watch questions Tamil Nadu Police over custodial deaths in Madurai



HIGHLIGHTS

Human rights organisation in Madurai, People's Watch, has accused top police officers in Madurai of hiding evidence in custodial deaths that have been reported in the area

Madurai: Henry Tiphagne, executive director of People's Watch, a human rights monitoring organisation, accused top police officials in Tamil Nadu's Madurai of hiding evidence in the custodial deaths of an autorickshaw driver A Manikandan and a boy, Muthu Karthik.

"The police had no business to torture the youth who was booked under Section 75 of City Police Act. After brutally torturing him, he was let out on payment of fine. But, again he was picked up by the police as he had a scuffle with someone," Tiphagne said while addressing the media.

Tiphagne said that Manikandan had pleaded with his sister to be taken home. But the police refused to send him claiming that he was only pretending to be injured.

However, the next morning, the police called the family claiming that Manikandan was not feeling well.

Tiphagne stated that the police had made the family members run from pillar to post did not even inform the family about his death. Only when they attempted to shift the body stealthily to the mortuary, the family members came to know about his death, said Tiphagne.

“While the custodial death could be due to brutal attack by the police personnel of the station, all top officers, right from the commissioner of police to the assistant commissioners, conspired to hide the crime from the family. Despite the fact that it was a death due to custodial torture, the police ensured that the postmortem was done within 30 minutes that too around 11 pm, contrary to all known medico-legal procedures,” he said.

While the family members wanted to bury the body, a large posse of police ensured that it was forcibly cremated to prevent re-postmortem, Tiphagne alleged.

Tiphagne said that District Legal Services Authority should ensure free legal aid to the families of those who die in police custody till necessary actions are initiated in all courts of law.

Tiphagne’s allegations come in the wake of the country seeing several other custodial deaths. On June 21, Rajkumar, who was in Kerala’s Peermade sub-jail, complained of physical illness and was taken to Peermade Taluk Hospital, Idukki, but died on the way. This after he was allegedly tortured at the police station.

But as recent as July 2, another victim has raised a complaint against the same police station in Kerala. Hakkim was taken into custody on June 14 for an alleged fight. He was lodged at Nedumkandam Police Station, in Idukki, Kerala, when the earlier victim Rajkumar was also present there.

Hakkim told the media that he had heard cries of someone from the next cell. Hakkim has been released after 16 days of being in jail and he is currently admitted in a private hospital for treatment.

<https://www.mynation.com/india-news/chennai-after-fridge-explosion-now-ac-blast-injures-couple-pu29q1>