

HC judges speak to Revathy

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Head constable is a key witness in custodial deaths case

In an unprecedented development, Justices P.N. Prakash and Pugazhenthii on Thursday spoke over phone to head constable S. Revathy, who had testified before the Kovilpatti judicial magistrate, about the custodial torture of trader P. Jayaraj and his son J. Benicks at the Sattankulam police station, and assured her of safety.

Revathy's testimony was among the key factors that prompted the judges to observe two days ago that there was prima facie material to book the accused police personnel for murder.

"This is unprecedented in the annals of the judiciary. When the judges spoke to her over phone, they showed much concern and assured her that everyone in her family would get utmost protection. What else would a witness need? It is a great gesture that will encourage everyone to come forward to tell the truth to the world about anything happening against the rights of every human being," said advocate Henry Tiphagne, executive director of People's Watch, a human rights group.

Ms. Revathy was on duty at the police station on the night of June 19 when the father and son were allegedly tortured by other police personnel.

Earlier, Ms. Revathy had said: "I told the judicial magistrate the truth and what I actually heard and saw. Though I wanted that what I recorded with the judicial magistrate should not be made public, it has appeared in the media. And, I never thought it would create such an insecure situation for me and my family. I feel that my higher-ups should not disturb me for having deposed and my family should get due protection."

It required a lot of persuasion from various quarters including her children, for her to muster the courage to tell the truth to the magistrate.

It was against this backdrop that the High Court judges spoke to her over phone for about four minutes to instill confidence in her.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/hc-judges-speak-to-revathy/article31975335.ece>